



# THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL FORCES IN INDIA

## SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF BIKANER

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THE FOLLOWING SPEECHES, MADE BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJAH OF BIKANER, BETWEEN THE WAR PERIOD 1917 AND THE ASSEMBLY OF THE INDIAN ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER, 1930, DISCUSSING THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL FORCES IN INDIA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PROBLEM OF THE INDIAN STATES AND THEIR POSITION IN THE INDIAN EMPIRE, ARE PUBLISHED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION.

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# INDIAN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

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(Speech at the Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association (United Kingdom Branch) to the Indian Delegates, in the House of Commons, Harcourt Room, on 24th April, 1917).

MY LORD CHANCELLOR, MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

It is with no small feelings of gratitude and pleasure that I rise to offer to the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Chamberlain and to you, my Lords and gentlemen, on behalf of India and on behalf of the Ruling Princes, and on behalf of my colleagues and myself, our respectful and grateful thanks for the extremely kind and generous terms in which reference has been made to us here to-day, and for the kindly welcome and reception with which you have honoured us. We particularly appreciate the signal honour which you have done us by going out of your way and establishing a new departure by giving us, a non-Parliamentary people, this very kind and hospitable entertainment. It will be greatly appreciated in India, and believe me will evoke the warmest response in all parts of my country. They will specially appreciate the courtesy you have done us, as coming from an Association like yours, so closely related to that great institution of this realm, known throughout the world as the "Mother of Parliaments"—an institution which it is the aim and ambition of all countries, old or new, to adopt, with such modifications as may be necessary to suit their own conditions.

Let me say at the outset that the fact that India has, for the first time, been invited to send her representatives to the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference has caused widespread gratification as a just but, may I be permitted to add, somewhat overdue recognition of her unflinching loyalty and devotion to her Emperor, of her position within the Empire, and of the services which, as in the past, it has been both her pride and her privilege to have rendered to her Sovereign and the Empire in the greatest crisis which we have had to face. I have not come to England to urge the claims of India. It has been my honour to be selected amongst the representatives from India to give our local experience or views that may help the Empire to bring the war to a successful and glorious conclusion. I beg you to believe that the first consideration at the present moment in India of all concerned is to devote all their energies and all their resources to the war.

But as so much is written and said about the aims and aspirations of India, perhaps you would to-day desire me to tell you something about them.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you that some two-thirds of the area of our country is British India proper, and one-third represents the territories of those independent Ruling Princes of India which enjoy and glory in the protection of His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor, and which are proud to have come into the British Empire through treaties of perpetual friendship and alliance with the British Government or other similar engagements.

Incidentally, I may mention here that next year it will be exactly one hundred years since my own State and my ancestors entered into political relations with the

British Government by concluding such a treaty of perpetual friendship and alliance, and if, by the grace of God, the war has by that time been brought to a successful conclusion, we hope fittingly to celebrate the event.

To revert, however, to India and her hopes in regard to the future, I think I can sum them up in a few sentences, and here when I speak of India I refer both to British India and to the Indian States.

Our first and foremost consideration and constant care is at all times to render what little service we can to our Emperor and the Empire, for I hope it is hardly necessary for me to assure you that we are all deeply imbued with feelings of profound veneration and devoted attachment to our gracious Sovereign and his Throne. It is equally unnecessary for me to assure you that the welfare of the Empire, for loyal and patriotic reasons if also for motives of enlightened self interest, is a matter of abiding interest and concern to us. (142) 4475. 121

Subject always to these two essential qualifications and considerations which are ever uppermost in the mind of every thinking and loyal Indian (and they irrefutably form by far an overwhelming majority of our population), our aspiration is also to see our country under the guidance of Britain—and, as Mr. Chamberlain said, with the help of Great Britain—making material advance on constitutional lines in regard to matters political and economical, and ultimately to attain, under the standard of our King Emperor, that freedom and autonomy which you in this country secured long ago for yourselves, and which our more fortunate sister Dominions have also enjoyed for some time past.

On our loyalty to the Sovereign and of our genuine desire to contribute our utmost towards the well-being of the Empire, it is not for me to dwell on this occasion. I must leave that to you and to the future verdict of history, but I would venture with all modesty to express the hope that India and the Indians will not be found to have lagged behind in their efforts in the cause of the Empire.

As to our future aspirations, there are various matters of importance to us, such as a sound system of education, and industrial and economical development—still practically in its infancy in India—on which much could be said, but with the short time at our disposal I will confine myself to the political aspect, which it appears desirable in the interests of the Empire as a whole should be brought forward clearly and prominently.

My Lords and Gentlemen, is it any matter for surprise that India should be aiming at her political regeneration? You have given education on Western lines to Indians and after centuries of close and intimate connections with Great Britain—the land of liberal traditions and popular institutions—we Indians would be foolish if we did not see much that was good in your political life in this country. And we would be still more foolish if, after grasping the good points of your national life, we did not desire to have grafted or assimilated all that was good in your institutions and system, wherever and whenever our conditions permitted it.

Regarding India's desire for ultimate self-government and autonomy within the British Empire, I am prepared to admit that it presents a difficult problem. But is the difficulty such as to be insoluble by British statesmanship and British good will and sympathy, or are the existing conditions in India so hopelessly irreconcilable with Indian aspirations as to render the question merely academic, not worth serious thought, but fit to be relegated into the background, only to be brought out in a dim and distant future? Certainly there is diversity of race. But does not even the United Kingdom

consist of three different races? And is not Canada inhabited by, at least, as great a diversity of races and nationalities? And what about South Africa? And when talking of different races and customs as existing in India, we must bear in mind that India is not a country but really a vast continent; it is not a State but an empire within the Empire.

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Then, unfortunately, we have unrest and sedition in India, though people at a distance not fully acquainted with facts are apt in this connection to get a somewhat erroneous impression. I know that it is not necessary for me to point out that so far as sedition is concerned it is confined to an extremely small percentage of the vast population of India—to the extremists and to the anarchists. The millions of the Indian peoples are loyal to the core. The unrest that exists is of two kinds, that which the seditionists attempt to spread, happily with small response, has to be faced and is being faced and suitably tackled by the authorities. And it is our earnest hope in India that we may gradually be in a favourable position to eradicate it. It is a cancerous growth not peculiar only to my country. The other kind of unrest is what, if I mistake not, was so aptly described by a British statesman a few years ago as legitimate unrest. It originates from impatience at the rate, and the nature, of the political progress made in India. It is in the minds of people who, rightly or wrongly, hold these opinions but who certainly are as loyal as you and I are. I decline to believe that British statesmanship will not rise equal to the occasion. For it depends on the various complex and important Indian problems being handled with sympathy, with imagination and with a generous and broadminded perspicacity and boldness by the responsible Ministers of the Crown, whether or not such unrest will die out or continue. And it is further the considered opinion of many who have given the subject a thought, that if the people of India were given a greater voice and power in directions in which they have shown their fitness, we should hear much less of unrest, agitation and irresponsible criticism. Certain it is that despondency and desperation would give way to patience and fortitude, for India has confidence in the word and good faith of Great Britain. The enemies of order and good government would then be without the lever with which they at present attempt to swell their ranks and to spread sedition.

You have doubtless heard of the "Unchanging East" which  
 " . . . bowed low beneath the blast,  
 In patient deep disdain,  
 She let the legions thunder past,  
 And plunged in thought again."

But I can assure you that India at least has been, and is, changing very rapidly and beyond conception, and that under the invigorating influence of Great Britain she is making truly remarkable and gratifying strides.

No reasonable-minded person will contend that India is ripe at the present day for self-government in the full sense of the term, but there are many who think that there is yet room for further political reforms and advance. On the part of Indians we need patience, a due sense of responsibility, and, above all, concentration on that which is attainable. To you we look for sympathy and help, readiness to recognize the changes which are taking place in India and to help Indians to achieve that further progress and in due time to realize her cherished aspirations. We are confident that these questions will be considered in time and in such a manner as to permit of something being done at the conclusion of the war—not as the price of the loyalty of India, for no one knows better than she that loyalty has no price and that her adherence to Great Britain and the Empire is not due to any unworthy motives, but because she feels that she can only realize her object within the great British Empire and with the sympathetic aid and assistance of the British people.

There may be differences as to the nature of India's demands, but there can be no difference as to their being perfectly reasonable and legitimate ; and here I should like with your permission to read an extract from a speech made at Manchester only yesterday by my distinguished colleague Sir James Meston, who holds the high position of Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. Speaking of the demands and yearnings of India, he said :—

“ Its ideals at least are not unworthy. They are precisely the ideals which you yourselves have followed through the centuries and which you are now securing.

“ If wisely guided, this spirit will vivify India's pride in our Empire, her affection for England and that firm and unbargaining loyalty, which . . . is the proudest tradition of all that is best in India.”

Perhaps I might mention here in case it be thought by anybody that the States will be alarmed at and resent political advance made in British India that we of the Indian States—and I speak for the Ruling Princes no less than our subjects—would rejoice at such progress, for after our concern for the Empire our greatest anxiety is to see our country progressing and prospering and our fellow-countrymen in India receiving what is their due. To show you that I am not speaking in an irresponsible manner, I would point out that at least 10 per cent., so far as I remember, of the important States already have representative government. Every year some States are being given representative government on generous and constitutional lines, and this shows that though we are autocrats we attempt not only to march with the times, but also to do our duty towards our States and people.

And what can I say to-day in regard to that one-third of India in area and some one-fourth of its entire population consisting of the Indian States, the more important of which are under the direct government of the Ruling Princes and the other States under that of the Ruling Chiefs. Though not technically forming part of British India, we are proud of our unique position within the British Empire, having come under the suzerainty of the King-Emperor and in political relations with the British Government by the treaties and engagements to which I have already briefly alluded and I venture to assert that we yield to no one, not only in British India, but in the whole world, in our loyalty and attachment to the King-Emperor. And as allies and friends no one has more at heart the best interests of the British Government.

Situated as we are we have naturally resented any undue interference in our internal affairs—and here we must gratefully acknowledge the sympathetic attitude of successive Viceroys of India as well as of the Government of India and, as I hope I may say to his face, that of the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for India. Although each State has preferred to be left free to manage its own internal affairs on the lines best suited to local circumstances, local peculiarities, and local traditions and sentiment, and thought different ideals and different standards of administrative efficiency exist, there is no diversity of views and thoughts in matters of Imperial concern. Again, I prefer not to deal with such services as we may have been able to render during the present crisis. But as regards our past services, it must be known to you that in the Mutiny the States all fought on the side of and stood steadily for the British Government, just as a matter of fact did the greater number of the people of British India and some regiments of the Indian Army, even though it was called the Indian Mutiny and the Mutiny of the Indian Army. But as regards our utility in the Empire, it will suffice for me to give you the following short extract from the famous despatch of 1860 from Lord Canning :—

“ The safety of our Rule is increased, not diminished, by the maintenance of Native Chiefs well affected to us. . . . In the Mutiny these patches of



Native Government served as breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave, and in quiet times they have their uses. . .

“ And should the day come when India shall be threatened by an external enemy, or when the interests of England elsewhere may require that her Eastern Empire shall incur more than ordinary risk, one of our best mainstays will be found in these Native States. It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we could keep up a number of Native States as royal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval superiority in Europe was maintained.”

As to the future, we have not got many ambitions. Assured of our possessions and of our position, rights and privileges by the gracious pledges given in the historic proclamation of Queen Victoria of 1858, pledges which have been equally graciously re-asserted by both his late Majesty and our present beloved Sovereign, we only ask for the privilege of being allowed further opportunities of serving our King-Emperor and the Empire, and for the continuance of the good will and sympathy of the great British nation in our endeavours to work out our own salvation in the best interests of the Empire, our States and our subjects.

As Rulers governing such a vast area in India we, however, feel that if we are to keep abreast of the times, and of the conditions prevailing and likely to prevail in British India, and that if we are fully to secure and to retain our proper place in the constitution of the Empire, there must be developments. We feel that we must have a regularly assigned and more definite place in the constitution of the Empire by the institution, at an early date, of a Council or Assembly of Princes formed on proper lines, where important questions concerning ourselves, our States, and our people on the one hand, and the British Government on the other, can be discussed and settled just as Legislative Councils exist in British India. I should perhaps make it clear that we have no desire whatever to encroach upon the affairs of British India, more than we should relish any outside interference with our own internal affairs. These ideas, which have been maturing for some years, were definitely and officially brought forward by a large and representative number of Ruling Princes at a meeting convened by Lord Chelmsford at Delhi in October last, and the Viceroy's speech and the attitude of the Government of India lead us to hope that the question is receiving sympathetic consideration.



# Insistent Claims for Reform in India

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(Speech at the banquet in London to Lord Sinha, Under-Secretary of State for India, on the 7th March, 1919).

YOUR HIGHNESS, MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I consider it a privilege to preside here in response to the invitation of the Committee, and to propose the toast of the Right Honourable Baron Sinha of Raipur. I have the greatest pleasure in thus associating myself wholeheartedly with his other friends—and their name is legion—to offer our warmest congratulations upon the honour which His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor has been graciously pleased to bestow upon Lord Sinha by his call to the Privy Council, his elevation to the peerage, and his appointment as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India.

Another object of this function is to enable his fellow-countrymen to give expression to their grateful appreciation of the true statesmanship and the rare stroke of imagination which prompted the Secretary of State to suggest, and the Prime Minister to accept, the appointment. India welcomes this step as clearly emphasizing the determination of His Majesty's Government to carry through, without unnecessary delay, a substantial measure of constitutional reform. We perceive in this appointment a striking reassertion of the purpose of the British Government to continue, and extend, in spirit and in letter, the fulfilment of the solemn pledges given in the Charter Act of 1833, and renewed in what all Indians treasure as their Magna Charta—Queen Victoria's gracious Proclamation of 1858, that race or creed are no disqualification for admission to offices under the British Crown. Further, we rejoice to see in this selection yet another practical illustration of the welcome change in the angle of vision regarding Indian affairs, and of the better understanding and increased mutual confidence and respect between Englishmen and Indians, induced by a closer association and prolonged comradeship in arms in every theatre of the War. This longed-for consummation has been rendered further practicable by the complete victory of the forces of our King-Emperor and his Allies—to which, we are proud to feel, India has contributed her full share—and the ultimate vindication of justice, right, and liberty, over might and brute force.

My friendship with Lord Sinha, dating back many years, has been strongly cemented by our close contact as colleagues at the Paris Conference, and previously at the first Imperial War Cabinet and Conference. I can, therefore, speak with intimate knowledge of the guest of the evening. I do not propose to give a detailed catalogue of his many gifts and virtues, for to do so in his presence would put a strain upon one of the most precious of his gifts—his unassuming, yet dignified, modesty.

Lord Sinha combines a profound patriotism for his mother country with the utmost loyalty to the British Crown, and a grateful appreciation of all that India's connection with Great Britain has meant for his native land. His high sense of public duty, his keen insight, and his strength of character, have been demonstrated in many ways, and not least by his never having attempted to court cheap popularity by playing to the gallery. He has always unhesitatingly spoken and acted according to the dictates of his conscience in support of what appeared to him to be the best for India, as also

for the British Empire. Law, order, and good government have been as dear to him as the continued political advancement of his countrymen.

These characteristics have distinguished Lord Sinha, alike in exerting, in his private capacity as an Indian gentleman, that personal influence for the common good which his honourable record and untarnished reputation have won for him; in presiding over a session of the Indian National Congress; or in occupying the chair of Macaulay, and Maine. From that farsighted Viceroy, Lord Minto, downwards, it was universally admitted that he maintained the highest traditions of the Law Membership. And the same qualities have been shown on the three consecutive occasions of his representation of British India at the counsels of the Empire. His sterling worth has won for him both East and West of the Suez Canal the respect of Englishmen and Indians alike. Lord Sinha holds the wonderful record of being the first Indian appointed Standing Counsel, and afterwards Advocate-General, in Bengal; the first Indian to be a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council; the first Indian to be made King's Counsel; the first Indian statesman to be a Privy Councillor and to be a member of His Majesty's Government and, of course, the first Indian peer. His country is justly proud of this great Indian who has led the way in so many spheres with such conspicuous merit and success.

It is, therefore, not too much to say that if there was one Indian whose appointment as Under-Secretary was certain to evoke widespread approbation it was Lord Sinha. The cordial reception which, with the innate sense of justice and fair play characteristic of the British people, has been extended to Lord Sinha's appointment with virtual unanimity by the responsible press and informed public opinion of this country have been noted with lively gratification in India.

But there have been a few—we are glad to feel, only a very few—exceptions which have been wounding to the self-respect of Indians, and which have shown how acute a form political and party differences and racial prejudices can take. In the short time at our disposal it is possible to deal only with a few of the insinuations and misrepresentations of those who, posing as experts on India, have been assiduously carrying on an anti-reform—I do not hesitate to say an anti-Indian—campaign.

It is an open secret—and I hear that that popular Governor, Lord Willingdon, told the story in a sympathetic speech at the dinner recently given in his honour—that for some years the highest authorities in India had been urging upon His Majesty's Government the pressing necessity for a declaration of British policy in relation to Indian aspirations. I think I can add without impropriety that it subsequently fell to the lot of those of us who had the honour of representing India here two years ago further to press this consideration. This view was accepted by that high-minded statesman, Mr. Austen Chamberlain. His successor, within a few weeks of receiving the seals of office, made the most welcome and historic announcement of the 20th August, 1917, with the full authority of His Majesty's Government and the concurrence of the Government of India. Two months later, in the Upper House, Lord Curzon showed the necessity for this action in the following eloquent terms :—

“ You cannot unchain the forces which are now loosened and at work in every part of the world without having a repercussion which extends over every hemisphere and every ocean; and, believe me, the events happening in Russia, in Ireland, in almost every country in Europe, the speeches being made about little nations and the spirit of nationality, have their echo in India itself. If the noble Viscount (Lord Middleton) had been at the India Office in the past summer he would have been the first to bring to us those serious representations continually coming from the Government of India and its head, and to have called

upon us to take action and make some pronouncement. That is exactly what happened, and this statement of policy, not at all challenging, couched, I think, in most moderate and certainly in well-thought-out terms, was the subject of repeated discussion at the Cabinet."

The Declaration and the official visit to India of Mr. Montagu, at the express invitation of the Viceroy, were productive of immense good—a view which is widely shared by both the Princes and people of India.

We knew some of our old Anglo-Indian friends too well to expect them to be in real sympathy with such a Declaration. And no reasonable person will for a moment cavil at honest differences of opinion. But what do we find? On the 30th of October, 1917—several days before Mr. Montagu had reached India on the mission with which His Majesty's Government had specially entrusted him—the Indo-British Association held its inaugural meeting in London. The minutes of its proceedings were published under the surprising title of "The Interests of India." Perhaps it was chosen because one of the professed objects of the Association is, we are told, "to promote and foster the unity and advancement of the Indian peoples." The methods, arguments, and manifold activities of the Association have, however, singularly disguised this avowed aim; and all that we can say is—save us from such friends.

The Association does not expressly oppose the Declaration. But its real hostility to the policy of His Majesty's Government is revealed in almost every phase of its activity. From the first it has been developing a ceaseless pamphleteering and press propaganda. The booklets and leaflets it issues so freely are intended to alarm the ordinary man as to the condition of India, to belittle in every possible way the educated classes of that country—and indeed everyone who has the temerity to disagree with its views—and to appeal to the personal and class interests, at one time of the working man, at another—and more frequently—of business firms participating in Indian trade. Such firms were asked by circular, intended to be private, but which found a publicity unwelcome to the authors, for subscriptions to the Association of any sums from £1,000 downwards. The suggestion was made in this begging letter that such subventions should be regarded as "an insurance premium for business interests in India." Now, we believe in an industrial as well as a political future for our country, but we have yet to learn that the Indian Empire exists for exploitation by any particular commercial interests. As my right honourable friend, Mr. Chamberlain, publicly said when Secretary of State, India refuses to be regarded any longer in the economic sphere as a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water. But industrial development means increased purchasing power, and British trade stands to gain and not to lose thereby.

My Lords and Gentlemen, unless I have been greatly misinformed, I think that the word "reaction" has not been entirely unknown in connection with your domestic policy. And one section of your extremists in this country—for India has no monopoly of this class of people—is sounding shrill notes of alarm about India. Without going back to earlier occasions, we recollect that similar cries were raised some twelve years ago, when the Morley-Minto Reforms were under consideration; but with this difference, that as there is now an Indo-British Association, the anti-reform agitation is more noisy and persistent. Uneasily conscious that they are fighting a bad case, the Association—and in my remarks to-night I include generally the writers and speakers who have been co-operating in the campaign—freely resort to vituperation and personal abuse. Indians—including the dangerous and scheming Bengali peer in my right!—have been indiscriminately branded as agitators, and India represented seething with sedition and crime.

The policies of four consecutive Secretaries of State—Lord Morley, Lord Crewe, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and Mr. Montagu—and of three consecutive Viceroys—

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Lords Minto, Hardinge, and Chelmsford—have been criticised in the most unjust terms. In fact, the “non-contents” would have you believe that they are right and that the Prime Minister, His Majesty’s Government, the Secretary of State, the Viceroy, and the Government of India are all wrong. We are even asked to believe that Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford are out to weaken British authority in India, and that they are courting a grave political disaster. The burden of their jeremiad comes to this: Carry the reforms through, aim at responsible government in India, and you strike a blow at the rule of the King-Emperor in India. But they have deliberately suppressed the fact that the Indian leaders fully recognize and have repeatedly stated that their ideal of self-government can only be realized by India remaining an integral part of the British Empire. This recognition is prompted, not only by that deep and universal loyalty of the Indian people to their beloved Sovereign which their religion and traditions enjoin, but also by what has been termed “reasoned attachment.”

The mendacity and unfairness of such a campaign is nowhere more conspicuous—and that is saying a great deal—than in a pamphlet of the Association, under the title of “Danger in India: Sedition and Murder,” an annotated epitome of the findings of the Rowlatt Committee. You can imagine how eagerly anti-reform capital is made therein of these findings. Lamentable and serious as are the outrages dealt with in the Report, they relate to the nefarious activities of an infinitely small number out of a loyal Indian population of 315,000,000, constituting one-fifth of the inhabitants of the globe. The *Times of India*, an English-owned and edited journal, which merits as fully to-day, as when uttered, Lord Curzon’s description as the greatest newspaper in Asia—in an article headed “The Danger in England”—has characterized the comments of the pamphlet as “conspicuous for their deliberate admixture of lies and bad logic.” After giving chapter and verse in support of this statement, the *Times of India* concludes:—

“We confess to a feeling of shame when we find Englishmen banding together, as they are doing in London, to oppose the Reform scheme by every method, fair or foul, that they can think of. It is the final stage surely on the slippery path of dishonest politics when the Indo-British Association joins hands with the Extremists not only in opposing the Reform scheme, but in an attack on the Moderate Party.”

It has even been stated that Lord Sinha’s peerage and appointment will be resented by the Indian Army. Now, I claim some acquaintance with that Army. I have, in participation with it, had the honour of fighting under the British flag in Asia, Africa, and Europe, my first campaign dating back nineteen years. My own subjects freely enlist in the Indian Army. I have no hesitation in contradicting this absurd allegation, and I only wish our critics had been present in Paris the other day when, on our visiting together a club for Indian troops, three very lusty cheers were given in honour of Lord Sinha.

It cannot too often be emphasized that India, especially in the last decade or so, has been progressing at such a rapid rate that the people who left the country even five years ago are not entitled to speak as experts. And it is all very well to refer to isolated incidents and opinions of individuals—usually anonymous—claiming to represent this or the other class in India. What India asks is that her affairs should be judged as a whole and by the public declarations of her responsible leaders.

We also take our stand upon the far-sighted declarations and policies of a succession of English statesmen who have been associated with the Indian administration. The Indians are nothing if they are not loyal to their friends, and gratefully responsive to fairness, sympathy, and understanding. And let me say frankly that Indians, Princes and people, indignantly resent the abuse to which Lord Hardinge, Mr. Montagu, and

Lord Chelmsford have been subjected. We in India often wonder whether it is realized fully in this country how inestimable was the value of Lord Hardinge's services during his Viceroyalty. At the luncheon given to the Indian representatives last year, Lord Sinha rightly interpreted the general feeling in India when he assured Mr. Montagu of India's trust in him and of the warmest gratitude and approbation of her people for his courage, devotion, and statesmanship. May I take this opportunity of assuring Mr. Montagu of the high regard and friendship of the Princes of India and of the warmth of their feelings towards him? When the heat and strife of political controversy have passed, the names of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford will go down to posterity as of two great Englishmen who helped in the upbuilding of a stronger imperial fabric in the post-war reconstruction.

Finally, I must deal with an issue on which I claim a first-hand knowledge, at least not inferior to that of the Indo-British Association or even of vehement leaders-writers in organs echoing its views. The impression has been very freely conveyed that the Princes of India are hostile not only to Lord Sinha's appointment, but also to the reforms under contemplation. As one who has the honour to represent in England, for the second time, the Princes of India, I feel it my bounden duty to give to this gross misrepresentation the most authoritative and emphatic denial.

May I preface what I have to say with a word of explanation? As is well known, the Indian Princes belong to no political parties, whether here or in India. Their territories, representing an area of about one-third of the vast Indian Empire, are outside the limits of British India proper, and British jurisdiction is inapplicable therein. The interests of the Princes and their subjects—who constitute more than one-fifth of the entire Indian population—are thus already safeguarded in many ways by treaties of friendship and alliance concluded, almost invariably at least a century ago, and sometimes longer, between the Rulers and the East India Company. When the administration of British India was transferred to the Crown more than sixty years ago, these treaties were accepted as permanently binding both by Queen Victoria and the British Parliament. Such assurances have been graciously reiterated by each successive British Sovereign, in regard to the pledges and rights secured by the Princes through such treaties.

It follows that in matters relating to administrative reform in British India, the Ruling Princes are, in the direct sense, disinterested parties, actuated by no selfish considerations or personal motives, and that they have no axe to grind. I hope that their loyal and deep devotion to the King-Emperor and their attachment to the Empire need no words from me. Their only concern is to see such measures adopted as will further popularize, strengthen, and preserve the ties that bind England and India together. They have amply demonstrated time and again that in any matter endangering the Empire they can always be relied upon unhesitatingly to fight for the British Throne, and to range themselves in a solid phalanx on the side of constituted authority. Nothing is more true than what has been repeatedly stated by the high officers of the Crown and the Princes themselves that there is a very great and real identity of interests between the British Government and the Princes.

Is it conceivable, therefore, that the Princes would be in sympathy with, much less advocate, any measure of a revolutionary nature, or prejudicial to the stability of the King-Emperor's rule in India?

Nearly two years ago, speaking publicly in London for the Princes, I stated that the Rulers of the Indian States, far from being alarmed at or resenting any political advance in British India, would rejoice at such progress. Nevertheless, persistent allegations to the contrary have continued to be made by Lord Sydenham and others. It has even been stated in a recent book, described in Mr. Garvin's paper, by one speaking

with authoritative knowledge of India, as "a harmful and spiteful contribution to the study of Indian reform," that some of us—and the reference to myself is obvious—do not represent the views of our brother Princes; whilst in another page it is definitely asserted that the Maharajah of Patiala and myself were merely re-echoing the "gentle words" of Lord Sinha!

I propose, therefore, to show categorically and conclusively the clear and unmistakable views held by the Princes of India generally in this connection. This is what the late Nizam of Hyderabad, the most senior of the Ruling Princes of India, wrote officially in 1909 to Lord Minto regarding the Morley-Minto Reforms and Lord Sinha's appointment as the first Indian Member of Council:—

" . . . . . Your Excellency will . . . . . quite understand how gratified I was to learn of the wise, generous, and liberal policy pursued by Your Excellency and the Secretary of State for India in giving effect to the principles announced in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 . . . . . by appointing an Indian as a member of your Executive Council and two Indians as members of the Council of the Secretary of State. This liberal policy, as also the enlargement of the Legislative Councils, will, I earnestly trust, serve to allay the present unrest and to remove altogether the seditious movement which is happily confined to a very small minority."

Without any disrespect, it can be said that His late Highness belonged to the old school, so that his observations are all the more significant.

The following is to be found in the Princes' speech in reply to the Viceroy's address at the Conference of Ruling Princes, held in Delhi in November 1917, which I was charged by a large and representative gathering of Princes to read:—

"In your speech Your Excellency has referred to the recent pronouncement made by the Secretary of State. The loyal attachment of the Ruling Princes to the King-Emperor is proverbial, and we consequently rejoice at the further accession of strength that this pronouncement and the impending political changes will bring to His Imperial Majesty's Empire by the enhanced loyalty, happiness, and contentment of His Indian Subjects. As Indians again we rejoice at the aspirations of our fellow-countrymen in British India being thus further met by this sagacious act of British statesmanship. Might we ask your Excellency kindly to convey to Mr. Montagu on his arrival here assurances of our warm welcome and our good wishes for the success of his mission?"

I might explain that the Princes' speech does not represent the views of any individual Ruler, but that the draft is adopted only after the most careful scrutiny and previous discussion at a general meeting of the Princes.

In a note by Sir John Hewett, criticizing the Indian Reform proposals, which was issued by the Indo-British Association, he said:—

"It is easier to ascertain who will be opposed to the scheme than who will support it,"

and included the Ruling Princes amongst the various "interests" who, he added:—

"it is certain . . . . . will be opposed to it,"

and wrote:—

"If the Maharajah of Patiala correctly interprets the feeling of the Ruling Princes, they will assuredly not be found to be enthusiastic supporters of the Scheme."

This imputation brought forth an immediate and clear public denial from His Highness.



Again, at the Conference held only in January last, the Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior, one of the most important Princes of India, in reading the reply of the Princes to the Viceroy's address, said :—

“ It inspires us with the brightest hopes for the good of humanity and the peace of the world to find the British Throne, to which we are bound by very close ties, more secure than ever before. . . . This security, which is broad-based upon the affection and good will of the people is, we firmly believe, going shortly to find its counterpart in the adoption of liberal measures calculated to improve the machinery of the governance of India. These measures, which are irrevocably promised, will bring in their train enhanced loyalty and contentment in India, and the ampler they can be made, with a due regard for the conditions that are, and the quicker they can be enforced, the greater will be their certain result. . . . Both the amplitude and the expedition are assured by the combination which we all regard to be of happy augury, viz., the continuation of Your Excellency's Viceroyalty and the re-appointment to the Secretaryship of State for India of the Right Hon. E. S. Montagu. The recent elevation of our distinguished countryman, Sir Satyendra Sinha, to the peerage, and his appointment to an office in the British Government, is an example of true insight, great political imagination, and what is even more important, of genuine honesty of purpose, and we refuse to credit the libel, from wherever it emanates, that in this measure of simple justice to a people there is even the slightest taint of party or other questionable tactics.”

Further comment is surely unnecessary, but, if the Indo-British Association is still unconvinced, I shall be happy to publish several more speeches in the same strain made by Princes representing the various Provinces of India in the last few years.

My Lords and Gentlemen, we are now face to face with one of the most critical periods in the political regeneration of India under the ægis of the British Crown. The decisions regarding Indian constitutional reform ultimately reached in this country must irrevocably affect, for good or ill, India's future political progress. Thus a very grave responsibility lies on His Majesty's Government, and the British Parliament and people. It rests with them, by seizing the golden opportunity now offered of handling the Indian problem in a sympathetic and liberal spirit, with imagination, breadth of view and boldness, to bring about the greater happiness and the enhanced loyalty and contentment of the people of India. Thereby they will be doing a great service, not only to India, but also to the Empire as a whole, and will be acting in accord with the best traditions of Great Britain, the nursing mother of representative institutions and free nations. She has taught us to appreciate fully the rights and liberties of citizenship, which, now more than at any previous time, have become the natural aim and desire of every civilized people all the world over. Not only will India be placed well on the road to the goal of responsible government ; as an integral part of the Empire she will be enabled to bear a still greater share in Imperial burdens and responsibilities. A great deal of what has come to be known as “ legitimate unrest ” will further subside, and the anxiety and uncertainty in men's minds will be replaced by an ever increasing confidence in the fulfilment of Britain's glorious mission in India. Instead of being discredited and disheartened, the ranks of sobriety, moderation, and restraint will receive constant accessions of strength. A loyal, developing, and contented India will be an asset of immense value to the Empire.

On the other hand, should reactionary tendencies prevail in wrecking or whittling down the reforms, or leading to inadequate or half-hearted measures, inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the Declaration, a situation of extreme gravity will be created. Speaking under a strong sense of duty to the King-Emperor and the vast

Empire under his sway, I wish to sound this solemn note of warning. Should the counsels of the opponents of genuine reform be followed, feelings of bitter disappointment and grievous wrong will be dominant throughout the length and breadth of India. The full force of that dissatisfaction no man can gauge; but it must be obvious that in comparison with it the unrest and discontent of recent years would seem small. Should such a situation ensue, it is a matter for earnest consideration, whether the Indian people would be held solely responsible at the bar of history for results which would be as deplorable as they would be unfair both for Great Britain and for India. Let me assure you as an Indian, that India's Princes and people ardently desire progress without disorder, reform without revolution.

d We are persuaded to expect better things than that the British Government and Parliament should accept the guidance of reactionaries whose activities and constant libels on the Indian peoples are responsible in no small degree for the unrest, and which constitute a barrier to better feelings and closer understanding between Indians and Englishmen, and have so baneful an influence upon impressionable youths. Let us not forget Edmund Burke's striking axiom that "a great empire and little minds go ill together." As Lord Carmichael, another popular Governor, pointed out in the House of Lords last August, we cannot stand still; we must either go back or go forward. To go back, he said, is a policy the people of the Empire will not tolerate. Liberality, sympathy, and bold statesmanship have invariably answered well and advanced the greatness of the Empire in the past—notably in the case of the South African Union—and they will certainly not be misplaced in the India of to-day. Some two and a half years before the outbreak of war, His gracious Majesty said in his ever-memorable speech at Calcutta:—

"Six years ago I sent from England to India a message of sympathy. To-day, in India, I give to India the watchword of hope. On every side I trace the signs and stirrings of new life."

India has amply proved her right to share in the fairer and better world which we have all been promised on every hand at the victorious termination of the mighty struggle. If the British Government will but seize occasion by the hand to shape the promised reforms on bold and generous lines at the earliest possible opportunity, they will confirm the solidarity of the widely varied dominions of His Imperial Majesty George V by strengthening the most enduring ties between England and India—those of mutual trust and helpfulness.

# The Indian States ; Their Position and Their People

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(Speech on the 20th January, 1928, proroguing the Bikaner Legislative Assembly.)

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

In the interval since we last met some very important things have happened, and are still happening. Besides the advent of the Sutlej waters, which promise to affect materially the internal aspects of the State, other events are influencing its external relations. As you are aware, His Excellency the Viceroy announced a little while ago the appointment of an Indian States Committee which is to report upon the relationship between the British Government and the States, with particular reference to the rights and obligations arising from our Treaties, Engagements and Sanads and from political usage, etc. ; and the Committee is secondly to enquire into the financial and economic relations between British India and the Indian States and to make any recommendations that it may consider desirable and necessary for the more satisfactory adjustments of such relations. The Princes of India had for long been desirous of seeing their political relations with the British Government widely understood and appreciated in their correct constitutional and historical aspects, and of having their fiscal relations with British India carefully examined and adjusted in a manner equitable and just both to British India and the Indian States.

The request for a proper enquiry into these matters of such momentous importance to the Rulers, Governments and people of the Indian States was put forward on behalf of the States at a Round Table Conference held at Simla last May, which was presided over by His Excellency the Viceroy and was attended by some High Officers of the British Government and some Princes and Ministers representing the States. I had stressed the urgent necessity of convening such an informal Conference nearly eight years ago when I was Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes ; and it has been consistently and strongly urged ever since. I should, therefore, not only be failing in my duty but should also be erring against the well-known qualities of our race—grateful response to sympathy manifested and gratitude for good done—if, for the appointment of the Indian States Committee as well as for convening the Round Table Conference, I did not take this opportunity of publicly giving expression to the feeling of deep indebtedness of the Princes and States to His Excellency Lord Irwin, our popular and noble Viceroy, who—notwithstanding some ill-informed and ill-advised criticism appearing in a section of the Press, which I honestly consider to be as unjustifiable as it is unfair to His Excellency—has, in the comparatively short time that he has been Viceroy of India, already given various practical proofs of his generous feelings, sympathy and friendship for the Princes and States of India.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the work which will be undertaken by the Indian States Committee, or of the most far-reaching consequences to the States which are likely to result from its labours and recommendations. Indeed, in certain aspects, it is no exaggeration to add that the very existence of our States in the future may be both directly and indirectly affected thereby.

It is true that the scope of the enquiry is not as complete or wide as we should have wished, in that the future position of the Indian States in a self-governing India, in days to come, is not covered by the present terms of reference. But with an equitable and just appreciation and recognition of the constitutional relations of the States with the British Government, and a fair adjustment of our financial and economic relations with British India, the path it is to be hoped will be paved, and the task rendered easier, of ensuring that the Indian States shall find and take their rightful place in the future polity of India ; and the corollary to the present investigation must, in my opinion, be that in days to come—and I think in the near, rather than in the distant, future—a further investigation will have to be made with a view to safeguarding the just rights of the Princes and people of the States as a politically separate and constitutionally independent unit of the great Indian Empire.

As regards the personnel, I will straight away concede that the States would have preferred some Princes and Ministers appointed on the Committee. But with no Indians appointed on the Parliamentary Commission in regard to British Indian Constitutional Reforms that was not to be expected. Here I would digress for a moment to refer to the slogan of certain newspapers and politicians in British India, that the Indian States are a hindrance to political progress in British India. I will not for the moment make any comments on the correctness or otherwise of such a statement, but will content myself by pointing out that there is also a reverse side to the shield, and that the Indian States themselves suffer on account of the political situation in British India, which often has an adverse effect on their march towards their legitimate goal. Component members of one integral body have to suffer as much disability as they derive advantage from their mutual juxtaposition.

Some so-called friends have, in the press and on the platform, been good enough to urge the States to boycott this Committee. Considering that this Committee is appointed at our request, such a course would, in my judgment, be the height of folly, and the very negation of all that counts for statesmanship, which demands that we should seize every opportunity offered to us with a view to securing our rightful dues by friendly and wholehearted co-operation and persuasion, and by putting forward our claims in a just and clear manner. I will not attempt to controvert the fact that the States too have had to face various vicissitudes and have had their ups and downs, which have at times caused them anxiety and concern during the last century and more, since they came into political relationship with the British Government, through Treaties of Alliance and Friendship as in the case, for instance, of the Rajputana States, or through other causes.

But I feel sure you will agree with me that it is all important that we should at no time fail to retain our sense of proportion or to keep the right perspective in view. In spite of the suspicion and misgivings which certain so-called friends are striving to create in our minds as to the possible difficulties and dangers to which the Princes would be exposing themselves, and in spite of the apprehensions which, in all loyalty to the Crown and in perfect good faith, may be entertained by a few people in the States through extreme caution and conservatism—and such extreme caution and conservatism are also unfortunately not altogether unknown in the case of some officers of the British Government as well—regarding the possible consequences of our inviting such an enquiry, I am convinced—and I am sure you will agree with me—that the only right course for the Princes and States is to look forward to the deliberations of this most important Committee with faith and hope and with a robust confidence not only in the righteousness and justness of their cause, but also in the good faith, good will and sympathy of Great Britain and the British Government and their high Officers both in England and in India.

Before turning to other subjects there are one or two more points in this connection to which I feel constrained to refer. Extraordinary statements have been made on the platform and in the press of British India alleging a deep-laid conspiracy on the part of the Princes of India, and an unholy alliance with the "foreign" Rulers, with a view to retard the constitutional advance of British India. I have publicly referred to, and attempted to refute the correctness of these allegations on previous occasions—the last time during the visit to Bikaner a year ago of His Excellency the Viceroy—but, to our astonishment, these charges continue to be repeated—on what authority I am totally at a loss to understand. The Princes have lately also been solemnly warned not to interpose the bogey of their ancient Treaties and Alliances in the way of the freedom and emancipation of British India; whilst the demand has been enunciated to have our Treaties revised or scrapped on various grounds, including the argument that these Treaties are obsolete and that the Princes have no Sovereign rights.

Leaving out of consideration here the petty Rulers, and any isolated expressions of purely individual opinions of—at the most—a very small minority of Princes, I say without hesitation that if this is the genuine conviction of any sober-minded people in British India, the Princes as a body have been seriously misunderstood by some, and perversely misrepresented by others; and I challenge these totally unmerited, unfair and—I venture to add for reasons which will shortly be clear—ungrateful accusations.

From 1916 to 1921 I was Honorary General Secretary to Their Highnesses for the Annual Princes' Conferences held at Delhi, and from its inauguration in 1921 to 1926 I had the honour of being Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. Since then—although I have not sought re-election as Chancellor—I have still retained the closest touch with the inner counsels of the of the Chamber of Princes as a Member of its Standing Committee, and I have attended every important Conference with the British Government as well as amongst ourselves. Speaking thus in all earnest, and with a full sense of responsibility, I am, from my personal knowledge, in a position to give the most unqualified and emphatic denial to all allegations regarding any such alleged mean conspiracy or unworthy attempts on the part of the Princes of India as an Order; and I assert without any fear of contradiction that—whilst all the 108 Members of the Chamber of Princes cannot necessarily be expected to hold the same views—far from the Princes as a body having expressed any hostility to the legitimate aspirations of, or having taken any other improper steps with a view to opposing or checking the progressive realization of constitutional reforms in, British India, they have on various occasions not only made it abundantly clear that they have no desire to stand in the way of the political progress of their brethren in British India but they have also taken various opportunities, both in England and in India, of publicly expressing their approval and support of such constitutional reforms.

Without repeating all that has been said, I would refer such critics to the speech made in London, in 1917 at the Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association, and particularly to my speech on the 7th March, 1919, at the Banquet to Lord Sinha, where I gave chapter and verse not only of the opinions publicly expressed or written of some prominent individual Princes, but also the views collectively voiced by the Rulers of Indian States in the Princes' Conference in support of the reforms then under contemplation. The Chamber of Princes had not then been instituted; but I think I can, without being guilty of any impropriety, safely add that on no single occasion has any such dishonourable proposal even been mooted in the Chamber. Colonel Haksar and Professor Rushbrook-Williams, on their return from their recent Mission to Europe, therefore only reiterated what had already been duly put forward on behalf of the Princes, namely that, in asking for a Committee to

investigate into Indian States affairs—as indeed in regard to any other action that the Princes may have taken or urged—with a view to safeguarding the interests of their States and subjects, they were in no sense or degree hostile to the legitimate aspirations of British India.

In taking up this attitude, the Princes—in spite of some narrow-minded views taken by a few individuals in certain other quarters—were really influenced by their inborn loyalty and deep devotion to their beloved King-Empress and their attachment to the Empire—as I have had occasion to remark more than once previously—and by their keen desire to see such measures adopted as would popularise and preserve the King-Empress's rule in India, and would furthermore strengthen the ties that bind England and India together. Although many of the Princes were under no delusion as to the attitude of certain schools of political thought in British India—who even then desired to see the States wiped off the map of India—they were also influenced in taking up this attitude by their natural desire as Indians to see their Motherland rise to her full stature of Nationhood under the ægis of the British Crown.

Apart from certain other factors—which it is unnecessary to refer to in detail here to-day, since they are matters purely between the British Government and the States—it will, I trust, be clear that the request of the Princes for such an investigation as is now being undertaken by the Indian States Committee was in no way based on any hostility to, or conspiracy against, British India, but with a view to safeguarding the rights of the States, their Governments and their people, and their internal autonomy and independence. This desire was also based on the instinct of self-preservation and self-defence—which lies buried deep in the human breast—as well as on the rights of every individual, unit, or collective body to exist and to live its own life in peace and security. Not only from people obviously ignorant or hostile and unfriendly to the States or their Rulers, but even from certain individuals from whom the States did not expect such irresponsible statements to be made, have we heard the usual cries about the Treaties with the Indian States being no more than scraps of paper, and of no consequence, or that the States and their Rulers constitutionally possess no Sovereign rights or status. These light-hearted critics have even gone to the extent of saying that the States must go. Some speakers and writers have furthermore bluntly arrogated and reserved to themselves, and to the Government of British India of the future, the “right” to interfere in all kinds of matters—external and internal—appertaining to the States and thus to infringe our Sovereignty and to violate our autonomy—fiscal or otherwise. The States were also influenced by the apprehensions thus caused generally amongst the States by such claims and threats, to seek safety and security for the future through such an enquiry at the hands of a Committee.

In view of such extravagant claims and random remarks which have been, and are being, indulged in in British India, it appears necessary that there should be some plain, but dispassionate, speaking so that there might be no room for uncertainty or misunderstanding. Many an Indian State has existed not only long before any one in British India claimed the right to meddle or interfere with them, but long before even the Moghul Empire established its sway over the country. The great majority of the Indian States have come into political and Treaty relationship with the British Government, not through conquest, but because such States, or the British Government, or both, desired to enter into such alliances for mutual benefit; and such Treaties did not therefore, generally speaking, *grant, create or secure*, but *guaranteed* many of the rights which were already fully possessed and enjoyed long since by the Indian States. Even Lee-Warner—whose doctrines cannot be said to be too favourable or friendly to the standpoints of the States—refers with emphasis to the great respect paid to the Treaties, and to their sanctity and binding nature; and the same applies with equal force to subsequent official assurances, including pronouncements by

different Viceroys right up to the present time. The most formal recognition had been given to these Treaties, which have been accepted by the British Parliament as binding on the Crown; and, above all, there are many Royal Proclamations and gracious pledges and assurances given and reiterated by Queen Victoria, King Edward, and our present gracious King-Emperor, which—to quote the words of His Imperial Majesty in the Proclamation read at the inauguration of the Chamber of Princes in February, 1921—after expressing His Royal “determination ever to maintain unimpaired the privileges, rights and dignities of the Princes of India,” contains the following significant words:—

“The Princes may rest assured that this pledge remains *inviolable* and *inviolable*.”

In these circumstances, it will be clear that, unless such Treaties and Engagements are modified or abrogated by the mutual consent of the Imperial Government and of the Princes, their provisions continue to have full force; and any one suggesting the scrapping of these Treaties is, it will be obvious, guilty of making not only a highly unjust, but an immoral suggestion. History has been read in vain if it has not yet taught them that it is only brute force that will compel the States to submit to their Treaties being scrapped.

Just as the very existence of the States depends on a just observance of their Treaty Rights, so are the States and their subjects equally concerned in safeguarding their Sovereign rights and internal autonomy, which vitally affects them in many matters of the highest importance—political, economic and fiscal—and I need say no more on the subject beyond quoting a small paragraph, again from Lee-Warner:—

“... Violence must be done to history, diplomatic engagements, legislative enactments, legal decisions, and long-established usage, if we are to discard ideas of suzerainty or sovereignty as inapplicable to the Native States of India, and incompatible with the future development of the Indian Empire.”

The subject of interference and intervention in the internal affairs of States is too important and comprehensive to deal with adequately in the course of a few sentences, even if this was the right time and place to do so. Suffice it to say that the sooner such notions are dismissed from the minds of all concerned—including the refrain “the States must go”—the better it will be for the destiny of our Motherland. For the Indian States have no intention meekly to submit to any such demands; and they certainly will not go under without a struggle.

The territories of the Indian States occupy over a third of the total area of India, whilst their subjects comprise more than one-fifth of the population of the Indian Empire. The States are scattered over the length and breadth of India, and have been here for centuries, and demand the right to exist. India is the common heritage of the peoples of British India as well as of the Indian States; and the one will find the other of help and use; and it behoves both to respect the rights and liberties of each other, to refrain from interfering with their respective domestic affairs, and to derive the benefits which each one is in an undoubted position of offering to the other. I am one of those who, after giving earnest consideration to the matter, hold the view that in spite of some difficulties, which are only to be expected in all such matters, there is no reason why, with wise statesmanship and mutual toleration and goodwill, both British India and the Indian States should not fit in with any future scheme of Imperial or Indian Polity when India becomes self-governing under the ægis of our King-Emperor.

There is one other matter to which it is important to allude to-day. Side by side with the allegations made that the Princes and States are opposing and obstructing the constitutional progress of British India, has been raised another bogey—in which

it is surprising to find that some subjects of the Indian States, totally oblivious of all obligations of patriotism and gratitude to their parent States, have joined—namely, that the Princes are entering into another intrigue with the alien British Government, and have asked for this Indian States Committee, with the object of placing impediments in the way of the political advancement of their subjects, and to keep them out of their just dues, or in other words that the Princes are also conspiring against their own subjects. A greater and sadder travesty of facts it is hard to imagine!

I hold no brief for my Brother Princes; and to-day I am speaking entirely in my personal capacity as Maharajah of Bikaner. Human nature being what it is, and with different conditions prevailing in different States, it is inevitable that there should be found good, bad and indifferent Rulers amongst our Order—as in every other community—and that their administration should similarly vary according to the standards of life and the general atmosphere prevailing in each State. No conscientious Ruler can have any sympathy whatever with any “black sheep” in his flock, who bring discredit to the Princes and States; but from isolated cases, and a few instances of misrule, any sweeping generalization and insinuation that all Rulers are alike cannot but be termed as a wanton and mischievous perversion of truth. Fair and honest criticism is beyond exception; but from column after column of malicious criticism and calumny indiscriminately hurled almost daily at the Order of the Ruling Princes in a certain section of the press one might almost imagine that we were not living in a civilized India, but in a barbaric land, where the hand of every Ruler was turned against his own people, where the Ruler was a tyrant, and ruling with an iron rod, oblivious to the interests and the well-being of his own people.



As stated by the Prime Minister in his speech in the Legislative Assembly on the 25th August last—

“ . . . at present the people of Bikaner, like those of other States, are also suffering from this disability in another form of double taxation, in that Customs Duties on goods imported into the States are also levied by the British Governments at British ports. As is well known, the Chamber of Princes has been earnestly representing these matters to the Government of India, with a view to the subjects of the States being made to pay such duty only once and that to the Government which has undertaken to pay for all their advancement.”

One of the two equitable solutions of this important question is that the State should be given its proper share of the Imperial Customs Revenues levied at the seaports. Another alternative would be some other satisfactory arrangement by which goods required for consumption in the States would without breaking bulk be admitted free of any Customs duty.

This is one of the matters which will doubtless be taken up by the Indian States Committee; and, should, as we all most sincerely hope, some such satisfactory results ensue, you, Gentlemen of this Assembly, do not require to be told by me that it is the subjects of our State who will benefit first and foremost, and more than the Ruler of the State or his Government, as you would be saved from paying double Customs duty for an article imported into our State.

I am one of the foremost amongst those who eagerly look forward—as the Prime Minister has already publicly declared to you with my full authority—to the day when the Customs duty levied in the Bikaner State can be entirely abolished—which, I can safely state, will in such a contingency be done as soon as we have paid off our public debt, recently contracted for remunerative canal and railway construction purposes, which will be a matter of only a few years.

I trust that sufficient has been said by me to demonstrate the great importance to the Princes as well as to the people of the Indian States of the work undertaken by the Indian States Committee and how much it is in our joint interests that all such matters should be thoroughly sifted and duly adjusted without delay; and I know that you will unite with me in the hope and prayer that the outcome of the deliberations and recommendations of the Committee will lead to a carefully conceived and permanently settled policy—in matters political as well as fiscal—framed on generous and sympathetic lines regarding the Indian States, and devoid of all diplomacy—secret or otherwise—for which there should be no room in dealings between friends and allies, and colleagues and partners, whereby the ties binding the Princes to the Crown and the Empire will be further cemented and strengthened, and still greater and lasting solidarity will prevail between the British Government and the States with their very real identity of interests. And let us also express the sincere hope that another direct benefit resulting from the appointment of this Committee, and a proper examination of all such important questions, will be to dispel the clouds of suspicion and mistrust arising in British India, and any doubts existing in the minds of any subjects of the States.

" . . . no one who thinks seriously and earnestly can shut his eyes to the fact that our future really depends largely, if not almost exclusively, upon the Rulers of States themselves, upon the extent we the Princes realise our great responsibilities and the sacred duty God Almighty has committed to our care, upon the manner in which we direct the affairs of our States, upon the amount of care and thought which we bring to bear upon questions of vital importance to the well-being of our States and our subjects. Very difficult times unmistakably lie ahead of us . . . there is no use blinking the fact that the trend of certain schools of political thought is not in our favour. . . . Times are changing, and the Princes and States too have to adapt themselves to modern environments. Some of our States have every reason to be proud of their splendid achievements and of the high goal towards which they are so assiduously working. In some States, on the other hand, the need for reform will no doubt be apparent. It behoves us all—the Princes and their Ministers—to see to it that nothing which duty and prudence dictate is left unattended to. No doubt the future destiny of the Princes and States of India will be determined by the will of God; but if we discharge our duties properly and are not unmindful of our responsibilities, He in His infinite mercy will assuredly extend to us His protecting hand and guidance."

As I have previously remarked, the various Indian States are in varying degrees of advancement at the present moment, and thus no stereotyped model of Government can really be said to be effectively and completely applicable, or most suited, to each and every one of even the larger States, since every State must be the best judge of conducting its internal affairs in ways best suited to local circumstances, peculiarities, traditions and sentiments, and to the different ideals and standards of administrative efficiency and education prevailing. It is also an irrefutable fact that reforms emanating from within, and on the initiative of the Governments of the States themselves and the steps taken by the Rulers of their own free will and accord, are far more likely to be successful and to lead to the most beneficial and lasting results all round.

The standard of education as existing in most parts of British India and that in the majority of the States does not bear any comparison. So too representative and popular institutions in British India have had a long—a very long—start of the Indian States. Whilst some of the, even then, most advanced States, such as Mysore, to their great credit, started Legislative Councils and other representative institutions—under whatever names and forms they were then known—it is only in the last decade, or at the most two, that such popular institutions have, if I mistake not, come to be established in some of the other States.

Anyhow, as His Excellency Lord Irwin remarked in his speech at Raskot, in proportion as our "administrations approximate to the standards of efficiency demanded by enlightened public opinion elsewhere, the easier it will be to find a just and permanent solution" of the difficulties and disabilities which the States have been suffering from.

But—whether we view them from the standpoint of the East or the West—there are some well recognized and all round accepted principles and functions of good Government, and of Regal obligations and duties of Rulers to their subjects, over which there can be little, if any, dispute—whatever the standard and conditions prevailing in any State, and wherever it is geographically situated. They form the hall-mark of every State worthy of being ranked as enlightened and progressive, and these, to my mind, are the essential preliminaries—the *mensura*—which can inspire the general confidence of the public both within and without his territories, and which any Ruler (or State) should aspire to ~~not~~ <sup>put</sup> ~~put~~ <sup>put</sup> his house in order to withstand the ~~force~~ <sup>force</sup> ~~light~~ <sup>light</sup> which bears upon a Throne.

It is in no vainglorious spirit, but with a feeling of devout thankfulness and profound gratification, that I and my Government feel happy, with our hands upon our hearts, to think that these are the general principles—the essentials—of good government which we have humbly but earnestly tried to follow—with what measure of success I must leave to the judgment of posterity—which can be summarized as below :—

- I. For the Ruler of a State to have a fixed and well-defined Privy Purse and a clear dividing line between his personal expenditure and that of the State.
- II. Security of life and property by the employment of as efficient and uncorrupt a Police as possible for the maintenance of Law and Order.
- III. Independent Judiciary.
- IV. The Reign of Law, including certainty of Law, its uniformity and approximation where possible with the laws of British India with such additions and alterations as local conditions may render necessary.
- V. Stability of Public Services.
- VI. Efficiency and continuity of administration.
- VII. Beneficent rule in the interests of the general well-being and contentment of the subjects.

These seven points are well worthy of being the watchwords of internal reforms in the States, and of being adopted in the almanac of every Ruler or Government of an Indian State—each point to be emphasized and specially remembered for each day in the week.

They do not differ from the Hindu ideal of Kingship so aptly placed before us by our own *Shastras*. I do not forget that at some places a king is described therein as embodying within him the spark of Divinity, but that spark is also hedged round with, and cased within a sheath of, stern behests and sacted commandments, which a Ruler is under an obligation to comply with by his Coronation Oath. According to the formula of that Oath enjoined by the *Aitareya Brahman*, the King is sworn at the time of his Coronation with the following abjuration, which he has to repeat with Faith :—

"Between the night I am born and the night I die, whatever good I might have done, my heaven, my life, my progeny, may I be deprived of, if I oppress you."

In the *Shanti Parva* the King is asked to take the *Pratigra* mentally, verbally and physically :—

"I shall see to the growth of the Country, considering it always as 'God.' Whatever Law there is here, and whatever is dictated by Ethics, and whatever is not opposed to polity, I will act according to. I shall never act arbitrarily."

This is the ideal of the Reign of Law, which places Law above one's desires, caprice and fancy. It also clearly brings out how Law is supreme—superior even to the King. The King cannot arbitrarily create Law. He has to carry out the Dharma as is prescribed to him, and must subordinate his own wishes and inclinations to the paramount dictates of Dharma. Such is *Dharmaraj*, or the Reign of Law. Law or Usage was known as *Prithu*; and the King, or "Parthiva" was one who not only ruled over the *Prithvi* (Earth) but who also upheld "*Prithu*"—Usage or Law.

A Ruler cannot also afford to be oblivious of the other commandments prescribed to the King at the time of his Coronation according to our ancient ritual. Before he was asked to sit on the Throne, the Priest exhorted him thus :—

"To thee this State is given, thou art the *Dharmaraj* and Regulator, thou art

steadfast and will bear *this responsibility* of the *trust* so given for Agriculture, for well-being, for Prosperity and for Development."

Modern theories about popular rights as conceived by Locke, of the *Contrat Sociale*, as taught by Rousseau, and modern doctrines about the Rights of man and of Kingship as a Trust dependent on the concurrence of the people, can find much support from the ancient Hindu Ideal of Sovereignty; and though it might not go to the length of laying down with Abraham Lincoln that "all Government is of the people, by the people and for the people," the relations between the Ruler and the Ruled, defined by the Hindu Sages and *Smritikaras*, left no room to the subjects of Indian States for undue apprehension or any need for a slavish appeal to the institutions and ideals of Western Polity for their common weal. Hindu Kingship is for protection, not for oppression. A *Kshat-Triya* Ruler was one who healed the wounds, or protected his subjects from aggression as well as oppression.

It is really remarkable and interesting to notice how the foregoing observations regarding the functions of good government tally with a Note written informally by an honoured and esteemed friend and a sagacious statesman recording an expression of his personal views about the general principles of good government, which this distinguished writer says :—

" . . . may be described as the task, firstly, of ensuring to the individuals composing the society governed, the opportunity of developing themselves as human beings, and, secondly, of welding them into a compact and contented State. The discharge of this double function involves the necessity of finding and maintaining the due balance between the rights of the individual and those of the State to which he belongs."

" Stated differently, the ordered life of a community depends upon being regulated, not by the arbitrary will of individuals, but by LAW, which should expressly or tacitly be based upon and represent the general will of the community."

" This is equally true of :—

Autocracy,  
Oligarchy,  
Democracy."

" And the efforts of Rulers therefore whether they be One or Many should be directed to the establishment of the Reign of Law."

The need for the Ruler of a State to have a fixed and well-defined Privy Purse and Civil List, and a clear dividing line between his personal expenditure and that of the State, is so obvious that it hardly requires any further remarks. The ancient Hindu Kings were similarly enjoined only to take a fixed sum, or a definite percentage of the total income of the State; and the Civil List of an enlightened modern Ruler is normally also fixed in one of the two ways.

Unless such a principle is scrupulously and rigidly adhered to, it follows that money which should be available for the development of the life of the community, and of its individual citizens, and for the general well-being and advancement of the State, is not forthcoming, which is bad for the State as well as for the Ruler and his Dynasty; and it is beyond dispute that no Ruler—as the custodian of the interests of his State and his people—can justify devoting a large percentage of the revenues of the State for his personal use. So urgent and important did I consider this measure of reform that, shortly after my coming of age, I, of my own free will and accord, introduced this system of a separate Civil List and Privy Purse on modern lines as long ago as

April, 1902; and it is matter of no small gratification to me to feel that I was one of the pioneers amongst the Princes of India in doing so; and, furthermore, that the Privy Purse expenditure in Bikaner has, during the last quarter of a century and more, been kept strictly and entirely separate from the State accounts. Under this arrangement only 5 per cent. of the Ordinary State revenues was, as you, Members of the Legislative Assembly, are aware, drawn upon for my Privy Purse, from which all my personal expenses, including the expenses of all my private establishment, etc., were defrayed on lines strictly laid down by me.

But it is not always easy to differentiate between personal expenditure and that incurred for Ceremonial purposes or for the Ruler in his position as Head of a State; and there was certain incidental expenditure which thus continued to be incurred by the State on my behalf. Although all such expenditure received the greatest personal attention—specially when the budgets were submitted to me—the matter continued from time to time to receive my earnest attention; and as a result of the orders issued at different times, action has been taken, with a view to the liability of the State for all kinds of expenditure—direct or indirect—incurred on my behalf, being definitely limited, and all such indirect items of expenditure have since 1925 also been transferred to the Privy Purse under the revised arrangements.

As the Prime Minister stated the other day in this House, the discussion of the Privy Purse, and Palace Budget, does not, under the present Constitution, fall within the purview of the Assembly; but, as he further informed you at the same time, I am always ready to take my subjects into my fullest confidence; and I have nothing to conceal. Therefore, a statement giving the broad details of the revised Civil List and Privy Purse arrangements has already been supplied to each Member of this Assembly with the Budget Estimates; and I desire to express my gratification at the good reception which you have accorded to the new arrangements. This statement gives the detail of every such item of indirect expenditure which formerly was incurred by the State, over and above the 5 per cent. paid for my Privy Purse. From this you will observe that in my desire to have a definite percentage, and final cut between State expenditure and the expenditure incurred on my behalf, I have preferred—even at the risk of the percentage being temporarily a little higher than what I desire sincerely and most earnestly—to transfer to the Privy Purse some items, which could, perhaps justifiably, have been charged to the State.

I will not anticipate a fuller statement, which before long is, under my orders, to be expressly presented to the Assembly, giving you fuller details in connection with all such items. It will therefore suffice to point out that items such as my official tours and visits, and even my official residence in the capital, viz., the Lallgarh Palace, and all existing Palaces and other residences, kept for my use in the State, have now been taken over by the Household Department, the expenses of which will be defrayed by the Privy Purse—including all future additions and alterations in the Public Works Department and the Electrical and Mechanical Department work, furniture, etc. Similarly, I have preferred to include the grant so far set apart for sumptuary allowance. All such expenses incurred, directly and indirectly, on my behalf, and including the 5 per cent. originally fixed for my Privy Purse, even now, amount to a little over 11 per cent.; and with the State revenues fast rising, and with the further, and substantial, increase which we expect almost immediately from the opening of the Gang Canal, I shall soon have the satisfaction of seeing all such expenditure kept at the definite figure of 10 per cent. of the Ordinary revenues of the State—which is the percentage which I desire permanently to fix. Of course, I am only speaking for our own State; and it is obvious that in some States, with smaller revenues, the percentage must vary and be larger.

There are several details in connection with the Privy Purse, such as extraordinary

expenditure on occasions of births, marriages, etc., which too are receiving my careful consideration; and as soon as we have been able finally to deal with such, all items which I sincerely desire in the interests of the State and its subjects, as well as of my family, the fullest information will be forthwith communicated to the Assembly.

The benefits of an independent Judiciary have always been valued most by me as an essential of good government. We were the first State in Rajputana to establish the Chief Court of 1910, and with its establishment the idea of separating judicial from executive functions began to assume shape. It matured in 1922 with the creation of a High Court—again the first, and I understand the only one in any State in Rajputana; and you will be gratified to learn that this beneficent measure has now been launched with the creation of separate District Judges' Courts in the various Nizamats of the State. What I most eagerly desire, however, to achieve is the advancement of those nation-building activities which go to secure the welfare of the people; amongst which the highest place must needs be given to education and sanitation. I rejoice to see that there has been a general awakening amongst my subjects and a genuine desire on their part to take full advantage of the educational facilities provided for them. From the Budget placed before you by the Prime Minister you will have seen that a generous provision has been made for the experiment of compulsory education during this year. Permissive legislation under which education can be made compulsory within selected municipal areas has now become ripe and this reform will have my cordial and sympathetic support when the necessary legislative enactment is placed before the Assembly.

I am pleased to see that my Government is making adequate provision for the female population of my State, both as regards their education and health. A qualified Lady Inspector of Girls' Schools, who has won repute by her experience, has been appointed to take charge of the Girls' Schools in the State, and gratifying signs are manifest that my people have commenced to appreciate the necessity of female education. It is also encouraging to learn that qualified matrons and nurses are being provided in the District Dispensaries to look after the welfare of women. In this connection, I am also pleased to learn that the Bikaner Municipality has already arranged for a qualified Health Officer and it is hoped that his vigilance will lead to the improvement of the sanitation of the City. You will be glad to learn that I have already approved of the scheme for a water supply at my capital; and steps are being taken for the appointment of an expert boring engineer for sinking artesian wells. The work will be pushed on as soon as the possibility of tapping a plentiful source of underground supply is established, whereby the one long-standing cause of the defective sanitation in the city and the acute discomfort of my citizens will shortly be removed.

The interests of the health of my people, however, demand a radical improvement in our social customs and usages; and I congratulate Seth Shiva Ratan Moha on his courage in introducing the Bill for the prevention of early and unequal marriages amongst the Hindus. This social evil has ruined the health of the people and has been sapping the very foundation of the whole society by retarding the physical development of the race. The rate of infant mortality is enough to astound the stoutest heart amongst us, and it is time we all woke up to this great social evil.

It is a matter of sincere pleasure to me that this bold reform has been proposed by a non-official member from amongst you. There are some matters no doubt where reform can proceed with greater propriety and better chances of assimilation, if it is inaugurated by the spontaneous will of the people. Such intelligent co-operation on the part of my people will have, I am sure, the beneficial result of speeding up much-desired reform in various directions. Every progressive government worth the name must provide itself with some machinery, by which it can inform itself of the trend

of public opinion and of the needs, desires and aspirations of the people, and through which the people can make their voice heard. Government without popular consultation must at all times be difficult, and may become impossible on occasions when new situations arise and unforeseen complications clog and paralyse the official wheels. I congratulate myself on the assistance and co-operation I have always received from my Legislative Assembly, and have been for some time anxiously thinking of how best to enhance its usefulness and its power for good. Although under the constitution of the Assembly legislation can be undertaken without reference to the Assembly, I am glad to be able to assert that not in a single instance in the past fifteen years since the inauguration of the Assembly, has my Government enacted any law without its being brought before the Assembly under the ordinary procedure. In connection with liberalising, where possible, and revising the Constitution and Rules of Business of the Assembly, I have much pleasure in announcing that this provision in the existing rules will be abrogated and that henceforth all legislation will be enacted only through the Bikaner Legislative Assembly. I have also asked my Prime Minister to convene an informal meeting with you with a view to elicit what further extension of your powers and privileges you desire which, I need hardly add, will receive my sympathetic and frank discussion with the non-official Members of this House, and to have a free and careful consideration. I am confident that by your continued loyal and unstinted co-operation the trust which I and my Government are placing in you will be fully justified and that you will serve your Sovereign and your State with the same steadfast fidelity and disinterested devotion as you have been exemplary in doing heretofore. I always bear in mind that the interests of the Ruler and the Ruled in a well-regulated State are identical, and that they form component parts of one harmonious whole. They stand or fall together, and the real good of the Ruler consists in promoting the good of his people. The strength of an Indian Ruler does not lie in the British bayonet, as alleged by some critics, but in the loyalty and affection of his own people; for, as I stated at Shivpur, of all citadels protecting his Throne, none is so impregnable as the one raised on the hearts of his subjects. May the protecting arm of our Patron Deities Sri Lakshmi Narayanji and Sri Karniji—ever bless my State in its onward march to peace, progress and prosperity.





# Internal Reforms in Indian States

(Speech in the Chamber of Princes on the 23rd February, 1928, in moving the Resolution regarding the appointment of the Indian States Committee and Internal Reforms in the Indian States.)

YOUR EXCELLENCY, YOUR HIGHNESSES,

Opportunity was taken, during the last Session of this Chamber, to express our gratitude and gratification at Your Excellency's decision to convene the informal Round Table Conference, which met at Simla last May, where questions of great importance to the States were discussed—we trust to the mutual advantage of the British Government and of Indian India. Your Excellency's appreciation of the benefits accruing from such free and frank informal discussions was particularly pleasant for us to hear; and we in our turn came away happy from that Conference, full of grateful recollections of Your Excellency's courtesy and sympathetic understanding and appreciation of our standpoint; and we hope that that meeting was only the first of several more to be convened from time to time both during Your Excellency's Viceroyalty, and thereafter.

To-day I am privileged to move a vote of thanks to Your Excellency, and to the Secretary of State, for the prompt appointment of the Indian States' Committee, which was one of the specific requests we placed before you in Simla last May.

Questions of vital moment to the States will be dealt with by the Indian States' Committee. They are not without their complexities, inasmuch as the position of the Indian States within the Empire is acknowledged to be unique and without a parallel in history, and for the right understanding of certain problems connected with which neither International Law nor the Federal or Municipal Law of any country supplies any clear guide. But I feel sure that I am voicing the sentiments of this House—and indeed of the Indian States generally—when I repeat what I said in another speech a few days ago that it is a matter of congratulation and gratification, and as much in Imperial interests as in our own, that such important work is to be carried out by the Indian States' Committee during the Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin—who is proving himself so successful in unlocking closed doors and opening up sealed hearts—and that His Excellency has at his side, as his Political Secretary and Chief Expert Adviser, a sympathetic Political Officer like Mr. Watson, of whom high hopes are entertained by us. Indian India no less rejoices at the appointment as Chairman of the Committee of our old and esteemed friend, Sir Harcourt Butler.

To me personally also, it is a source of particular gratification to see the Indian States' Committee appointed. For, as early as 1915, at the desire of that great and popular Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, I wrote a Minute on various important matters concerning the Indian States, in the course of which I urged the necessity of convening at an early date a Conference:—

“for the consideration, in all their various aspects, and settlement, of such points . . . .”

But Lord Hardinge unfortunately left India shortly afterwards.

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In the interval the Princes' anxieties were reduced considerably by the hopes raised from the various reforms which were urged by us. But various causes and factors—which I need not touch upon to-day—intervened; and the actual experience of the working of the reforms relating to the Indian States, as outlined in Chapter X of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, clearly indicated to us that our expectations had not been fully realized and that something more was needed. I am one of those who hold the conviction that it is still possible to raise a noble edifice upon the foundations then laid, which can fully meet our various requirements, and prove of advantage to the States as well as to the Empire. Particularly do I hope that, different though it is in certain aspects from our conception and ideal, this Chamber of Princes—in itself a unique body without parallel, where the Sovereign Rulers of the Indian States under the benign protection of the King-Emperor, meet in friendly conclave with His Imperial Majesty's exalted Representative in India—will yet prove to be one of the most beneficial links in the chain that unite the Princes of India with the Crown, and play an important part in the future destinies of the Indian States. But in the circumstances briefly alluded to by me, it became my duty, as Chancellor of Your Highnesses' Chamber at that time, to explore further avenues with a view to securing adequate safety for the Indian States.

As Chancellor I had already officially put forward before Lord Reading in 1922 a proposal for an informal Round Table Conference—a request which it was ordained for Your Excellency to accede to fully five years later—and in August, 1924—after important consultations with some prominent Indian States' Ministers, whom I had informally invited for the purpose—I placed, again as Chancellor, before the Viceroy a definite request for the appointment of an Indian States' Committee.

I will not reiterate to-day all that I said only a few weeks ago in my speech in the Bikaner Legislative Assembly regarding the Indian States' Committee, nor need I allude again to all the allied details dealt with by me when I had the honour, in November, 1926, of moving in the Chamber of Princes a resolution of welcome to His Excellency Lord Irwin. I will therefore only refer to a few points in connection with the first part of my resolution. The need for overhauling, re-adjusting, and keeping up-to-date, the old machinery governing the Imperial relations with the States is obvious. Sir, I am an optimist and—whatever the difficulties—I do not believe that they are insurmountable; and I have an invincible faith in the power of honest, open statesmanship—devoid of all diplomacy and secret reservations and manœuvres. No political ill is hopelessly incurable if only it is rightly diagnosed and skilfully, as well as sympathetically, treated. As remarked by Your Excellency when opening this session and recently at Jodhpur:—

“If there be on both sides good will and a common desire to find for the various problems a solution, which will conduce to mutual prosperity and progress, we can face without anxiety whatever the future may have in store.”

Whatever the faults or shortcomings in the past—on either or both sides—one fact is really beyond doubt or dispute, viz., that, except perhaps in a few matters of minor detail, the interests of the British Government and of the Indian States are identical and that the future destiny of both is indissolubly interwoven. It is irrefutable that trust begets trust; and what henceforward is necessary—and what Your Excellency has yourself appealed for—is mutual trust and confidence and reciprocal good will, and a mutual appreciation of each other's standpoints and difficulties.

When I had the pleasure of welcoming Sir Harcourt Butler and his eminent colleagues to Bikaner the other day, I referred to my writing to Sir Harcourt and saying years ago that, finding ourselves, as we did, in the hands of such good doctors as the late Lord Minto and Sir Harcourt, one might almost have said that the wounds of the

past had healed, and that unless there was to be in the near future a change in the treatment, the wounds were not likely to open again. To-day I am particularly anxious to avoid, as far as possible, any reference to controversial matters; still less do I wish to refer on this occasion to the causes which in recent years led to a change of treatment and which retarded our progress. But I feel that this distinguished Assembly will wholeheartedly share with me the hope that history will again repeat itself, and that Sir Harcourt Butler will, with the willing co-operation of his Colleagues, and the sympathetic and strong support of His Excellency the Viceroy and the British Government, once again be instrumental in totally removing such malignant growths and thus help in bringing about a permanent and complete cure. I will, therefore, leave this subject after saying that the Chamber of Princes looks forward with hope and faith to the recommendations of the Indian States' Committee, and to their being considered and discussed in this Chamber, before His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and the British Government take up the final solution of the various problems involved.

I wish that my task in moving the second part of my Resolution was as simple as in dealing with the first part. No one is more conscious than myself of the difficult and delicate points involved; and it is only under a strong sense of duty to our Order, and because in my judgment it will be highly injurious to the interests of the Princes and their States to delay, that I venture to place this Resolution before Your Highnesses for your earnest and favourable consideration. For reasons which will be obvious, I feel sure that this House will believe me when I say that I do most heartily wish that there was at the moment someone else in my place speaking and moving this Resolution!

As from more points than one it is of the utmost importance to the Princes and their States that there should be no misunderstanding, nor any apprehension, in any quarter—including in the minds of those absent to-day—as regards the exact meaning and scope of this Resolution, and the reasons which have prompted me to move it—and which I hope will influence Your Highnesses to accept it—I would beg for the indulgence of Your Excellency and of Your Highnesses if I take up your time and recall certain details connected with this very matter which will make it clear that the subject matter of this Resolution does not come up before Your Highnesses to-day for the first time, and that there is really nothing new which I am springing on Your Highnesses to-day in the shape of a surprise. Indeed I should be sorry for the sake of our Order if I felt that this very important matter has not already been engaging the attention of those of Your Highnesses who look well ahead.

Speaking here as I am before some Princes riper in age and experience than myself, I would first beg Your Highnesses to absolve me from any intention of being dictatorial, or of being guilty of lecturing any Brother Prince—much less to this distinguished Assemblage, or to our Order.

The second point that I wish to make clear is that nothing in my Resolution, or in what I say to-day, is meant to imply—or can really be held to imply—that the condition of affairs in all, or even the majority of, our States is the opposite of satisfactory.

Our States and Governments as well as our subjects, it is true, are in various stages of advancement; and local circumstances and conditions and the standard of civilization must likewise vary—and late though our States were, compared with British India, in starting on modern lines of administration and education—we can look with satisfaction upon the fact that some of our States are very well administered and have attained a high level of advancement and development, which may well be the envy not only of other States, not so fortunate in possessing the same natural resources, but which would—I make bold to add—compare favourably with some



in his reference to "another aspect of the relations" of the Princes with the British Government, on which he did not think that in practice we should find ourselves in disagreement, stated:—

"The general policy of Government remains, as it has been in the past, a policy of non-interference in affairs that are internal to the States. It is only in extreme cases that the Paramount Power will interfere, and I can assure Your Highnesses that any such action which it is ever thought necessary to take, will be taken only after the most deliberate and sympathetic consideration, and with the greatest reluctance. Its sole purpose will be the furtherance of the interests, present and future, of the Indian States, and of the general Order of the Princes themselves."

His Excellency further was good enough to offer us his confidence, and observed that he knew he could count on ours; for indeed our mutual confidence is more than ever necessary at this stage of Indian political development. With this assurance, and with this appeal of mutual confidence in our minds, we can safely proceed on our task of discussing this Resolution: and, when explaining the wording of some of the clauses of my Resolution, I shall have something more to say, which I trust will further reassure Your Highnesses that we need not—on the score of this Resolution alone—be afraid of intervention, or dictation, from the British Government, or any of the local Political Officers, in regard to questions of Internal Reforms. On the contrary I would venture in all seriousness to say to Your Highnesses that by accepting and acting on this Resolution we should be definitely minimizing the risks of, and checking, intervention from the British Government or from any other quarters, inside or outside our States.

There is one more subject which I feel it important to dwell upon in these introductory remarks. It may well be asked "What are the grounds for this Resolution, and where is the necessity of moving it in the Chamber of Princes—why not instead deal with such matters in the Princes' Informal Meetings?" The answer which I give, with all respect and in all friendliness, is that such a Resolution is based on the very instinct of self-preservation and self-defence, and that it appears necessary that it be discussed in this Chamber of Princes for our future well-being and strength; and indeed I would in all earnest go so far as to say that it is imperatively necessary for the very existence of our States as well as for consolidating the position of the Rulers and their Dynasties. That it will also promote the well-being and contentment of our subjects, which so many of Your Highnesses really have at heart, and which is so essential for our own security, also goes without saying. But here I am specially emphasizing the grave risks which the Rulers of States themselves will run personally, and which they will furthermore leave as a bad legacy to their children and their children's children, in the near or distant future, if, where such reforms are necessary, no heed is paid to this matter of such vital importance to the entire Order.

As will be obvious, and as has repeatedly been pointed out by several Princes—including your humble servant—as well as some of our most able Ministers, at the Princes' Informal Meetings, and in the reports and recommendations of various Ministers' Committees, there are two ways of consolidating, strengthening and safeguarding the future position of our States, including our own position and that of our Heirs and Successors. Both ways are equally important, if not interdependent. One is to ask—and we have a right to ask—the Imperial Government to continue to respect and maintain, and take such steps as will effectively render secure, for all time, our Treaty and other rights, and internal Sovereignty as may be found mutually satisfactory and effective for the purpose, and, where need be, by revising their policy and improving the political machinery governing our own relations with the Crown. For this we have made every effort through the Chamber of Princes and our Standing Committee, and, let us hope that under the blessings of Providence, and with the sympathy and support

of His Excellency the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the British Government and the Indian States' Committee, our apprehensions may be finally laid at rest and our aims fully achieved.

But, Your Highnesses, as I remarked in my recent speech in the Bikaner Legislative Assembly, nothing that each one, or all, of them may do can completely and effectively, and *by itself*, secure the future of the Indian States. For, as I remarked in my speech on the 16th August, 1926, when inaugurating the Conference of Ministers held in Bikaner to discuss the future position of the Indian States:—

"No one who thinks seriously and earnestly, can shut his eyes to the fact that our future really depends largely, if not almost exclusively, upon the Rulers of States themselves, upon the extent we, the Princes, realize our great responsibilities and the sacred duty God Almighty has committed to our care, upon the manner in which we direct the affairs of our States, upon the amount of care and thought which we bring to bear upon questions of vital importance to the well-being of our States and our subjects. Very difficult times unmistakably lie ahead of us. . . . There is no use blinking at the fact that the trend of certain schools of political thought" (in British India) "is not in our favour. . . . Times are changing, and the Princes and States too have to adapt themselves to modern environments. Some of our States have every reason to be proud of their splendid achievements and of the high goal towards which they are so assiduously working. In some States on the other hand the need for reform will no doubt be apparent. It behoves us all—the Princes and their Ministers—to see to it that nothing which duty and prudence dictate is left unattended to. No doubt the future destiny of the Princes and States of India will be determined by the will of God; but if we discharge our duties properly and are not unmindful of our responsibilities, He in His infinite mercy will assuredly extend to us His protecting hand and guidance."

It will thus be obvious that certain important measures for the purpose of securing, and consolidating the position of the Indian States can only be undertaken by the Rulers and Governments of the States themselves; and Your Highnesses do not need to be told by me that in such cases where even the essentials of good Government are not manifest, no other course of action will stem the tide of public opinion in such States, which in such circumstances must ultimately sweep everything before it. Nor do Your Highnesses need to be reminded by me that the strength and the safety of a Ruler and his State do not for all time lie in the bayonets of the British Government or of his own Army, but can only be permanently secured and maintained if his rule is broad-based on the loyalty and affection and the contentment and co-operation of his own people. Hence the imperative and urgent necessity, where required, of putting our houses in order. Many instances are forthcoming of the disastrous results—disastrous not only to the Sovereign personally, but in my humble opinion disastrous in many ways to the State as well as to society—to the mightiest Sovereigns of some of the greatest Powers and Empires on the face of this Earth, who failed to detect the sign of the times and rushed headlong to their doom, or the doom of their descendants, through unwise autocracy. I need only mention Louis XIV—at one time the mighty King of the great French State and his Successors.

Let me not be misunderstood. As I have already said there is much in many of our States which we can be proud of, and which some of the less advanced States can well emulate; and although, in view of the fierce light that beats upon a throne, the occasional and sad lapses of a Ruler gain undue prominence and widespread notoriety, a greater truth was never stated than by that conscientious Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in his remarks during a discussion in the Princes' Conference on the 20th January, 1919, when he said that he did not believe that there was much misrule in the Indian States.

Human nature being what it is and with different conditions prevailing in different States, it is impossible to expect all the Rulers of our States to be of one uniform quality ; and occasional lapses are, alas ! inevitable. But such painful revelations, Your Highnesses will agree, do no good to the Order as a whole nor to the States as a body. Similarly the crippling beyond measure of the State finances, and the attendant neglect to find sufficient funds to ensure good Government for the State and for the purpose of advancing the happiness, prosperity and contentment of its subjects, has an adverse effect on us all in matters fiscal and financial as well as Political. And in this connection I am tempted once more to quote from His Excellency's recent speech at Rajkot :—

“ . . . the more your administrations approximate to the standards of efficiency demanded by enlightened public opinion elsewhere, the easier it will be to find a just and permanent solution ”

of the difficulties and disabilities from which the States have been suffering.

It is in view of all such, and other, considerations of the highest import to us and to posterity that, after the most anxious and deliberate consideration, and on the unanimous suggestion and advice of all my Brother Princes on the Standing Committee present in Simla last May, and of some of our ablest Ministers and other well-wishers whom I consulted, I have consented to move this Resolution to-day which—if the States are fortunate enough to receive Your Highnesses' general support and consent in passing—will carry with it greater formality and great weight, not to be expected at our Informal Meetings. For, the attendance there of all the Princes present in this Chamber cannot always be counted upon. The Resolutions of the Chamber have, of course, no binding force on any State, but they none-the-less carry great moral weight, and will, it is hoped, lead to their receiving a greater measure of serious attention and prompter consideration than any resolutions informally passed at our Informal Meetings. Also, from the short narrative of events which followed it will be noticed that although this all-important subject has from time to time, and for several years past, been considered by us at Informal Meetings, it has not received the widespread, earnest attention, nor have the results achieved hitherto been as effective or as satisfactory, as the importance and urgency of this very far-reaching question demand.

At our Informal Meetings in February, 1921, a small Committee of Princes and Ministers was for the first time appointed during my first year of office as Chancellor, to go into such questions affecting the future position of the Indian States and to consider what was necessary for the Governments of the Princes to do internally for strengthening the position of their States. Unfortunately we were meeting then at a time of great rush, which coincided with the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught for the purpose of inaugurating this Chamber.

Without going into the details of each and every subsequent occasion when we discussed such measures, I will specially remind Your Highnesses of one very important discussion in our Informal Meetings, held in Delhi on the 7th November, 1921, when His Highness the late Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior appealed to the Princes to leave no stone unturned in setting their houses in order. He particularly referred to the changed spirit of the times, and to the attempts made by a certain class of people in British India to excite feelings of disaffection in the minds of the subjects of our States. His late Highness expressed his conviction that unless the Rulers retained a hold upon the affection of their people, attended to their legitimate grievances and took a personal interest in the efficiency of their administration, there was a great danger threatening the existence of their entire Order ; and he observed that the problem of the future would get more and more complex and difficult, and that unless wisdom and care were brought to bear upon their solution, their successors would find their position rendered extremely insecure.

His late Highness of Gwalior again returned to the same subject in a subsequent informal discussion in November, 1924. In supporting his remarks I ventured to urge that we must seize time by the forelock, and that we must act—while there was yet time—and put our house in order, and thereby ensure the preservation of our States and Dynasties.

The Ministers' Report drafted at Bikaner in August, 1926, and presented in Patiala in February, 1927, also laid particular emphasis on the need of essential Internal Reforms; and I have already alluded to my inaugural remarks when opening the Ministers' Conference in Bikaner in August 1926.

His Highness, our present Chancellor, in addressing a circular letter to the Princes last year in regard to the Committee Meetings in Bikaner and Patiala also invited Your Highnesses' attention to this important matter. But unfortunately, as the question could not be adequately dealt with in the course of such a brief circular letter, some serious misunderstandings arose. I earnestly hope all such suspicions and doubts will be finally laid at rest by to-day's discussions as also by some further observations which I shall shortly be making when explaining the wording of the various clauses of this Resolution.

I will conclude my general observations by quoting the following five, out of many, relevant and significant extracts from a third party—a responsible, leading Indian Newspaper, which in its editorial on my Legislative Assembly Speech said:—

- (1) "If the Ruling Princes were . . . anxious to promote the welfare of their subjects, and to establish the rule of law, . . . there will be no section of Indians which would express feelings of hostility towards the Order, or advocate its abolition, or regard it as an obstacle in the way of India's attaining the goal of democratic freedom."
- (2) "There is no doubt that the present fiscal arrangements are grossly unfair to the subjects of Indian States."
- (3) "The demands of the Indian Princes are in essence similar to those of people in British India, namely, the freedom to manage their own affairs without outside interference. They would meet with considerable support from Indian Publicists if the Indian Princes follow the general principles in the discharge of their responsibilities enumerated by His Highness. . . ."
- (4) "If these Internal Reforms are introduced and carried out in the right spirit, the Rulers of States will have the united support of their subjects and people in British India in any effort they may make for preserving intact their treaty rights."
- (5) "Rulers who wish to increase their power and fortify their position should know where the real strength lies"  
(in, viz., the loyalty and affection of their people.)

I will now deal with and explain Clauses (3), (4) and (5) of the Resolution. Speaking generally first, I have attempted to avoid the use of such ambiguous terms as are likely hereafter to lead to difficulties as to their exact meaning and scope. For instance, "efficiency" of administration, or of anything else, is an extremely wide term, and we cannot have outside judges, or umpires reviewing and adjudging what does or does not constitute "efficiency."

Secondly, whilst on the subject of efficiency, I would invite special attention to the famous declaration of policy, which a widely respected and popular Viceroy, Lord Minto, made at Udaipur on the 3rd November, 1909, when he had Sir Harcourt Butler, as his Chief Political Adviser. Lord Minto on that memorable occasion said:—



"I have always been opposed to anything like pressure on Durbars with a view to introducing British methods of administration—I have preferred that reforms should emanate from the Durbars themselves, and grow up in harmony with the traditions of the State. It is easy to over-estimate the value of administrative efficiency—it is not the only object to aim at, though the encouragement of it must be attractive to keen and able Political Officers, and it is not unnatural that the temptation to further it should for example appeal strongly to those who are temporarily in charge of the administration of a State during a minority."

The third point in my general observations regarding, Clauses (3), (4) and (5) to which I wish to invite the attention of all concerned is that whilst the Princes of India are not unmindful of the altered circumstances prevailing in the world to-day, and will, it is earnestly to be hoped, be found to be keenly alive to their duties and responsibilities, they are not in any way conceding by to-day's Resolution, or debate, that they would willingly accept the views, or *chitr ditz*, of any outside party as to what is, or is not, sufficient or adequate, or what should, or should not, be done in their States in matters which come purely within the purview of their internal autonomy. Nor do they agree that a uniform standard of administration, to suit the diverse conditions prevailing among the various States in varying stages of progress, is possible of attainment, and that therefore every State and its Ruler must be the best judges as I remarked in my recent Legislative Assembly speech:—

"Of conducting its internal affairs in ways best suited to local circumstances, peculiarities, traditions, and sentiments, and to the different ideals and standards of administrative efficiency and education prevailing."

The degree of political consciousness awakened in the various States varies immensely in direct proportion to their education and contact with political ideals of the West. No wise man would accordingly dispute the claim of the Government of each State to be the best judge of the measurement, and the manner and the pace, of such internal administrative reforms as may be most suited to promote the progress and the prosperity of their States and subjects. It has been said that an Englishman's house is his own castle. This applies with all the greater force to the Rulers of the Indian States; and therefore it is essential that they must remain paramount masters in their own homes; and all such reforms, when and where found to be necessary—and as occasion demands—must for lasting success depend upon their spontaneously emanating from within and on the initiative of the Ruler and the Government of the State concerned.

It is important that here I should also make it clear that what I am to-day urging on the earnest attention of my Brother Princes, and what was proposed to be laid down by me in this Resolution, is in no way contrary to the terms of the memorable declaration, — our valued friend, the late Right Honourable Edwin Montagu of the 20th August, 17, when, as Secretary of State for India, he stated in the House of Commons that the responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people lay on the British Government and the Government of India:—

"The British Government and the Government of India . . . must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

The British Government cannot therefore reasonably expect the States to go further than the declaration made by the British Government—so far as it applied to them—in regard to the advance of constitutional reforms in British India. Although the Resolution, as I had originally drafted it, has been altered by me solely out of deference



frighten even the most conservative amongst us ; for, whether there are laws and codes, either original or enacted afresh and based on the laws of British India or any other States, it is obvious that, if there is even a semblance of the administration of justice and of codes and laws in a State, they must be based on some principles of justice ; and I should indeed feel alarmed as regards the future of our States if there was anyone amongst us so autocratic, or so bold, as to assert that such codes and laws must be ignored and the term " justice " so degraded as to disregard the legitimate liberty of person and the safety of property, or that they must be administered by a judiciary which is not independent of the executive in the dispensation of strict and impartial justice, but that it should be subordinate to the orders of the Executive Government or the will and caprice of the Ruler as regards conviction of people irrespective of their being innocent or guilty, or in awarding decrees in civil suits, irrespective of the ordinary canons of law, equity and common-sense. And it also follows that the judiciary must feel secure in their tenure of office—so long as they discharge their duties and responsibilities properly. What is necessary is that our judiciary must be charged with the administration of justice to the rich and the poor alike—without fear or favour, and equally to all our subjects ; and that there should be a proper and adequate judicial branch of the Administration in our States providing for adequate modes of redress as well as for appeal.

In essence, what I am urging to-day, and which I feel Your Highnesses will agree with me, is that there should be the " reign of law " prevailing in our States and not the " reign of desire."

As regards paragraph 5 (b), what is proposed is that there should be a settlement upon a reasonable, and, I would venture to point out, a definite, basis of the purely personal expenditure of the Ruler, as distinguished from the public charges of administration. I wish to make it clear that I do not talk of any fixed amount, or of any percentage, or of any other allied details. All these must necessarily and rightly vary according to the conditions prevailing in each State and particularly according to the revenues of the State concerned. The main point as regards the Civil List and Privy Purse of a Ruler is that it should be settled on a reasonable and definite basis, to enable the Ruler to maintain his position and dignity and that as large a proportion as possible may be available for the development of the life of a community and of its individual citizens.

It is difficult, here also, for me to conceive that anyone of us would be disposed seriously to contend the equity or the need for the Ruler of a State to have a fixed and well-defined Privy Purse and Civil List, and a clear dividing line between his personal expenditure and that of the State. The reasons for the same are so obvious that they hardly require any further remarks. The ancient Hindu Kings were similarly enjoined by our own *Manu* and our own *Niti*, only to take a fixed sum or a definite percentage of the total income of the State ; and the Civil List of an enlightened Ruler of modern times— even, I gather, in Western Countries—is consequently fixed at either a definite sum or at a definite percentage of the total ordinary income of the State.

It will be generally conceded that it is not always easy to differentiate between the purely personal expenditure of a Ruler and that incurred for ceremonial purposes or for the Ruler in his official position as the Head of the State ; and it is obviously quite impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules on the subject. The various circumstances prevailing in each State—with which the Ruler and his Government are best and closest acquainted—must supply the test in the consideration and settlement of such questions by the Ruler and his Government ; and so long as a sincere effort is made to draw a definite line of demarcation—where it does not exist—between the purely personal expenditure of a Ruler and the public charges of administration,

all other points pale, comparatively speaking, into insignificance. It must also follow, where the percentage of the State revenue is the guiding principle, that there can be no uniform standard applicable to the various States. For it is indisputable that whereas a certain smaller percentage would be a reasonable and definite basis for a big State with larger revenue, it follows obviously that with a State—say of a revenue of 1 lakh of rupees—a fixed percentage, say 10 per cent., would by no means suffice even for the reasonable personal expense of the Ruler—much less if he is to keep up his position and dignity. It therefore follows that such percentage in the smaller States with smaller revenues must necessarily vary and be larger.

I would like to emphasize that Your Highnesses are not being asked by the Chamber or me, or anyone else, to give any opinion whatever to-day on the various details of such settlements of Civil List and Privy Purses or what the percentage should be. This is a matter entirely for consideration and settlement in accordance with the conditions and circumstances and other factors prevailing in each State. Here again it is impossible to conceive however that any Ruler can seriously contend that he is justified in spending the greater proportion of the revenue of his State on his personal expenditure and on his pleasures and enjoyment—to the detriment of the interests of his State, his Government and his subjects. And at some Princes asked some questions on another point, let me also add that this Resolution here refers solely to the revenues of the State, and does not, of course, in any way refer to the purely personal income of a Ruler derived from private sources. Any Ruler who derives a private income from sources independent of the ordinary and extraordinary revenues of the State, such for instance, as inheritance, bequests, or from private estates outside the State, or savings from his own Privy Purse, etc., need not trouble to take such details into consideration for the purpose of this Resolution.

I believe that, except for isolated cases, there is, in accordance with either our ancient, or modern, ideals, real differentiation made in our States between the Ruler's personal expenditure and State expenditure; and Your Highnesses, in accepting Clause 5 (b) of this Resolution, would not be departing in any way from the ancient ideals of the *Dharma* of a Prince or the modern ideals of the duty of a Ruler, in regard to this important detail—upon which so much will depend, as far as the future of our States, and our own Dynasties is concerned. For it is on this score and because of the thoughtless acts of a few amongst us, that our entire Order is most frequently assailed.

I feel sure that Your Highnesses will agree that it is far, far better for all of us to take time by the forelock and to bring about such essential reforms in the interests of good government, as and where they are needed, on our own initiative and of our own free will, rather than have to do so under the force of public opinion, or other circumstances.

I would venture to add that in States where there is no Reign of Law, no independent judiciary fearlessly administering impartial justice, and where there is no clear cut line and proper distinction between the personal expenditure of a Ruler and the charges of administration, we also suffer in various fiscal and financial arrangements. For instance, I believe that our claim to a share in the customs revenues derived by the Government of India from British Seaports would be on a still stronger footing if we were able to demonstrate to all concerned that the proportionate amount to which our State is entitled from customs duties levied in British India would not be frittered away on the personal pleasures and expenses of a Ruler, but that it would benefit the tax-payers of our Indian States just as the revenue derived in British India in the shape of customs is undoubtedly devoted by the Government of India for the benefit of the British-Indian tax-payer.

In commending this Resolution, and particularly paragraph (5), I feel that it is necessary to invite Your Highnesses' particular attention to the fact that you are not signing a blank cheque, or committing yourselves *carte blanche*, to any undue encroachment upon your legitimate rights or prejudice to your interests. After all when we come to view it from the Eastern standpoint or that of the West, there can be very little that in essence is different in the Eastern standard of Kingship and beneficent Government from the modern ideals of good Government; and before concluding my speech I would, in support of my statement, refer to some of the well-recognized and generally accepted principles and functions of good government, and of Regal obligations and duties of Rulers to their subjects, over which there can be little, if any, dispute—whatever the standard and conditions prevailing in any State, whatever its revenues and resources, and wherever its geographical situation. Several of Your Highnesses are not totally unacquainted with an important Note, written entirely in our interests, and purely informal as an expression of his personal views, by an honoured and esteemed friend and sagacious statesman. I quote some extracts from it here not because of any desire to flatter but because I venture to think that when Your Highnesses come carefully, and even critically, to examine the principles enunciated therein, with which no reasonable person, with a wise apprehension and looking far ahead to the days to come, and with due regard to the best interests of his State, himself and his Dynasty, will really be in disagreement.

As said in this Note :—

“I. The functions of Government may be described as the task, firstly, of ensuring to the individuals composing the society governed the opportunity of developing themselves as human beings, and, secondly, of welding them into a compact and contented State.

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II. Stated differently, the ordered life of a community depends upon being regulated, not by the arbitrary will of individuals, but by LAW. . . .

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X. Every Government should have some machinery by which it can inform itself of the needs and desires of its subjects, and by which these can make their voice heard.

This machinery need not be strictly representative (or elective) in character, but its essential requisite is that it should maintain a close connection between Government and Governed.

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When referring in my Legislative Assembly speech to the widely accepted principles and functions of good Government—be it noted so far as may State and my Government were concerned and as an expression of my own opinion—I adumbrated the following seven points :—

I. The necessity for the Ruler of a State to have a fixed and well-defined Privy Purse and a clear dividing line between his personal expenditure and that of the State.

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I. The necessity for the Ruler of a State to have a fixed and well-defined Privy Purse and a clear dividing line between his personal expenditure and that of the State.

II. Security of life and property by the employment of as efficient and uncorrupt a Police as possible for the maintenance of Law and Order.

III. Independent Judiciary.

IV. The Reign of Law, including certainty of Law, its uniformity and approximation, where possible, with the laws of British India, with such additions and alterations as local conditions may render necessary.

V. Stability of Public Services.

VI. Efficiency and continuity of administration.

VII. Beneficent rule in the interests of the general well-being and contentment of the subjects.

Of the above points, II, III and IV are covered by paragraph (5) (a) of this Resolution; whilst point I, is covered by paragraph (5) (b). Point II, referring to security of life and property is partly covered by paragraph (5) (a), whilst the necessity of an efficient and uncorrupt a Police as possible for the maintenance of Law and Order requires no adumbration—difficult though the ideal is, as compared with what one may expect in this complex world of ours. Continuity of administration and its efficiency similarly needs no illustration—subject to the remarks I have already made above in regard to “efficiency” and similarly nothing in particular is necessary to be stated here for purposes of this Resolution in regard to point VII—Beneficent rule in the interests of the general well-being and contentment of the subjects—specially when we look at such principles from what has been stated above.

To secure good Government, we must obviously have competent machinery which is an essential of success; or, in other words, Public Services, to which capable, honest Officers would be attracted under a sense of security of tenure in accordance with the Civil Service Regulations of the State concerned and the contract of their service—so long as they discharge their duties with loyalty, honesty and efficiency.

It is unnecessary to add that these principles do not differ from the Hindu ideal of Kingship so aptly put before us by our own *Shastras*. Whatever difference of opinion there may be as regards the method of giving effect to them, I do not believe that there is really much, if any, difference between any one of us here as regards the general principles of good Government or the essential need of the States on their own initiative and in their own interest to put their houses in order.

As His Excellency remarked in his recent speech at Jodhpur, the solicitude for the welfare and prosperity of our subjects:—

“should be alike the pride and reward of every Ruler who has the interests of his State at heart. With the rapid spread of education the problems which the Princes of India have to solve are daily becoming more complex, criticism of their administration more and more insistent and the highest standard of Government more generally demanded by public opinion. It is wise to recognize and not to ignore the forces which are at work and to realize that a Prince who neglects to discharge with humanity and justice the sacred trust, which he has inherited, is not only sacrificing the interests of his subjects and his State, but is weakening the position of the Order to which he has the honour to belong. . . .”

Let us demonstrate to the world by the manner in which we deal with this Resolution—both here and hereafter—that Indian Kingship and our ancient oriental culture provide for just as good government as any system of modern rule or of Western democracy.

In conclusion, I must apologize for having taken so much of Your Excellency's and Your Highnesses' time in moving this Resolution. But I feel confident that it will be appreciated that the grave importance of the matter will be taken in extenuation.



I would venture earnestly and solemnly to repeat that, just as the ultimate decision to be arrived at by the Imperial Government on issues now before the Indian States' Committee is a matter of life and death for our States, so in my humble judgment it is equally a matter of life and death for our States, and for us ourselves and our Dynasties, what action we take, not only during to-day's debate, but also the action which each Ruler and State, if, and where, he finds the necessity for such action, will take upon our decision to-day—if, as I hope, my Resolution is accepted by Your Highnesses. We can but hope and pray that a just and equitable solution will be found by the Indian States' Committee and be supported by the Imperial Government, which would reassure the minds of the Princes, and that through the wise action taken by ourselves to-day and hereafter in regard to the aims and objects which this Resolution has, I trust, prominently placed before Your Highnesses, the strength and prestige will be advanced not only of the Princes and States, not only of the Great Indian Empire, but also of the greater British Empire, and that we—the Princes and our States and subjects—will thereby be enabled to take our proper and rightful place as "perpetual Friends and Allies" and enabled without encroachment, without menace, and without anxiety or vexation, to work out our destinies under the ægis of our beloved King-Emperor to whom we are bound by ties of the most steadfast loyalty and deepest devotion.



# The Indian States and the All Parties Conference

(Speech delivered at a dinner given on the 9th September, 1928, in honour of Sir Manubhai Mehta, Prime Minister, Bikaner State, on the eve of his departure for England in connection with the meetings of the Indian States Committee.)

After referring to the Scheme propounded with a view to submission to the Indian States Committee, and misunderstandings thereon, His Highness said:—

At the recent meeting of the All-Parties Conference at Lucknow, pointed references were made to the Princes' distrust of the British Indian people which was described as unwarranted. But what about the unmistakable spirit of hostility, and all the abuse and calumny which was heaped, without qualification, and in such a sweeping manner, and the grossly unfair, indiscriminate condemnation of all the Princes of India and their Governments, emphatically expressed on that occasion, with but a few honourable exceptions? Did the speakers pause to consider whether all that was not likely to force the States to regard that as a foretaste of what is to come when their British Indian subjects are arrayed against them? The only resolution relating to the States which was moved at that Conference—to which resolution I shall again have to allude a little later—was a motion in terms unmistakably demonstrating the bitter feelings of the mover. It was never taken into consideration whether this was in itself a very tactful way of expressing the Princes' distrust of the friendship, sympathy and good-will of British India and of removing their imaginary fear of such fellow-countrymen?

I have had to see only the report of the Lucknow All-Parties Conference Proceedings which appeared in the *Leader*, where great emphasis appears to have been laid by some of the speakers, who asked in effect that the Princes should accept the recommendations of the Native Committee relating to the States. In more than one place emphatic references were made to the British Indian leaders having declared their intention to abide by the Princes' Treaty and to the British Indian leaders being prepared to guarantee their rights and privileges most solemnly and sincerely, and particularly to the right of appeal to the Supreme Court which, it was stated, was accorded to the States.

So far so good; but these proposals have to be examined more minutely. In the first place, my brother Princes, I gratefully realise and recognise that there are many good men and true in British India who entertain sincere regard and genuine sympathy for the Indian States, and who would like to see a fair and square deal given to the Indian States, their Princes, Governments and their subjects. On the other hand, there is a strong appeal to the Princes by the mover of the resolution at Lucknow calling for "firmness and bravery and independence" and they do not, and cannot, forget that there are many people and political parties, including some prominent men in British India, who have never concealed their hostility to the States or made a secret of their determination to wipe them off the face of the earth at the first possible opportunity; and, indeed, at all the All-India talks, the Princes are never permitted to forget for one moment, from the threats used against them all indiscriminately in the Press and on the platform, or from a kind of fear, that the Princes and States are fore-doomed

to disappear, with the logical corollary that with the Princes' disappearance the Indian States will be merged in British India. The Princes are well aware that every bad Ruler, and every bad Government in an Indian State, are a grave menace not only to the Order of Princes, but to the Indian States as well. For those Rulers who are found wanting in their essential duties towards God and their States and their subjects, I and at least the majority of my Brother Princes have not one word to say by way even of extenuation—except perhaps that in at least the majority of such cases the cause will most probably be traced to their faulty up-bringing and education, and particularly to the unsuitable and inadequate administrative training imparted to them, for which the blame rests, not so much with the Ruler concerned, but, in the case of minorities with the Officers of the British Government and of the particular State concerned responsible for the training of the minor Ruler, and in some instances also, of course, with the parents of such Rulers. And as regards the really bad Rulers, of whom—in spite of allegations of hostile critics—there are happily not many, I am one of those who sincerely hold, as I have often said before, that in view of the menace and discredit which they bring to their entire Order, the sooner such bad Rulers can be made, by every reasonable and legitimate means, to see the error of their ways, and to mend their ways, the better for all concerned. But in regard to the Nehru Committee's recommendations and the observations and the resolution passed at the All-Parties Conference, we must leave aside, at least for the moment, all personal considerations and questions, and talk in the abstract about the Indian States; and it ought not to be difficult for our friends, as well as our critics, to realise that the dictates of prudence and precaution, not to speak of statesmanship, demand that matters of life and death to the States, such as those relating to our Treaties and Sovereign and other rights, cannot be left to mere chance or be dealt with in a vague, happy-go-lucky or haphazard manner; and that the Princes owe it as a clear duty to God, as well as to their States and subjects, to see to it as the trustees and custodians of their rights and interests that any arrangements that they may make or agree to as regards the future—whether with the British Government or with the future Commonwealth of India—are such as will in no way jeopardise the precious heritage, which the sword arms of their Ancestors, and the valour, loyalty and devotion of their subjects, built up for them and which has been handed down to them, from generation to generation, at the cost of much priceless blood and treasure.

A careful examination is therefore called for of the offer made to the Indian States by the Nehru Committee and the All-Parties Conference with a view to seeing to whether or not they adequately guarantee and safeguard the interests of the States, or whether something more definite is not required in the shape of Treaties or Covenants and other more formal, binding and irrevocable pacts and pledges.

According to the recommendations of the Nehru Committee :—

“The Commonwealth shall exercise *the same rights* in relation to, and discharge the same obligations towards, the Indian States, arising out of the treaties or otherwise, as the Government of India has hitherto exercised and discharged.”

This recommendation was endorsed at the Lucknow Conference; and it will thus be observed that, apparently without any regard whatsoever for the true constitutional position of the Princes and States and of their Treaties and other rights, the claim has been made, and accepted, on behalf of the future Commonwealth of India to exercise the *same* powers and functions and all the rights which the Government of India has *hitherto*, rightly or wrongly, exercised. It cannot be that, with some of the most prominent men and distinguished lawyers in British India of the ability and calibre of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Pandit Motilal Nehru on the Committee, some obvious points connected with the above did altogether escape their attention. In the circumstances, is it not strange that there are some obvious and glaring omissions and

that loose phraseology has been used in regard to making such a wide claim and proposition? If that is so, would it be unreasonable if the States came to the conclusion that all that was the result probably of a compromise made perhaps to satisfy all parties and schools of political thought represented in the Nehru Committee as well as at the Lucknow Conference? And I would proceed to ask what about the claims and complaint of the States dating back a good many years that, through whatever causes, there have in fact been numerous cases, not confined to any particular States or areas, of clear and definite infringement of the Treaties and other rights of the States? And in this connection, what about the official admissions by the Imperial Government, including the Government of India, made in various documents and speeches on the most formal occasions, in regard to such claims and grievances of the States? For instance, in one such formal and official speech, after referring to the causes leading to the development of political doctrines, and citing some of the more salient instances in which changes had adversely affected the States—or in other words where inroads had thus been made on the Treaties of the States—it was only a short time ago stated by no less a personage than the Viceroy and Governor-General of India that it could not be denied that the Treaty position of the States had been affected and that a body of usage—in some cases arbitrary, but always benevolent—had insensibly come into being. If the British Government and the Government of India on their own admission have thus been responsible—with however benevolent intentions—for the infringement of such Treaties, is it, or is it not, permissible to ask on what possible moral, legal or constitutional ground can a continuance of similar infringement on the part of the future Commonwealth of India and consequently a continuance of injustice to the States, be justified? And how can such arbitrary political practice or usage, etc., which is presumably what is meant by the term “or otherwise,” in which the States have had no voice, be claimed as a basis by the future Commonwealth of India for the exercise of such rights and relations with the States? It is to get such matters put right even under the present form of Government that the Princes have been working for some years past and for which purpose, amongst others, they have asked for a careful examination of their constitutional position and relations *vis à vis* the Paramount Power; and surely it will to the good that these should be thoroughly thrashed out and clearly defined and accepted on all hands, which must make the matter much simpler for the future Commonwealth of India also. It is also on this most important aspect of the Princes’ case that the Princes and their advisers have been engaged in England, and in regard to which the opinion of some of the most eminent Counsel in England has, as I have already said, been obtained; and such matters, it will be obvious, cannot be disposed of by hasty and arbitrary pronouncements or expressions of opinion of a personal nature, or by quibbles. The matters involved are of far too great moment to the States to be treated with such levity.

We can recall the expressions of opinion, or the *chiter dicta* of former Secretaries of State for India, Viceroy, or other officials of the British Government or any one else, however, eminent their position, some of which have been alluded to in the Nehru Committee’s Report, by themselves—in the absence of legal or moral sanction—cannot constitute an official and legal fact or the real status and position of the States; and that all such opinions cannot make one right. It, therefore, follows that if any powers of the States are, and are exercised by the Government of India at present are contrary to, and in breach of, and therefore opposed to the Treaties and the other legally established rights of the States, then their continuance, merely because such powers are, or are claimed in the past, or so far, been exercised by the Government of India, cannot, possibly, ever actually make it legally, justifiable or morally right for the Government of India to continue, or to claim to exercise such supposed rights, powers and claims. But perhaps here again there has been lack of clear thinking

In support of the statements at the Lucknow Conference to the effect that the Princes should have no hesitation in accepting the recommendations of the Nehru Committee and the resolution of the All-Parties Conference, some of the speakers advanced certain arguments which it is also necessary to examine—although I do not accept responsibility for the statements, nor is it necessary for me here to accept, or refute, the correctness thereof. One speaker said that he “refused to believe that Indian Princes were happy under the present domination by the British,” and yet immediately afterwards it was further argued that if the Princes had so far borne the autocratic rule of foreigners, why should they now fight shy to entrust themselves to the Indian democracy and that the Princes could not fare worse at the hands of Indians than they did now with Britishers. It was further argued that as the Princes had grievances of their own against the Government of India, they should now try the new system which was desired to be inaugurated. Here again, would not the States be justified in holding these remarks as implying that two wrongs make one right; that if the States had felt the full weight of the autocratic rule of foreign bureaucracy, they should now entrust themselves to the autocratic rule of, and “domination” by, their brethren of the Indian democracy; and that as we could not fare worse at the hands of this Indian democracy than we were faring at the hands of the “Britishers,” that we should be content to put up with the same. As the *Leader* has fairly and aptly put it in a recent article, the Princes, like the people in British India, also aspire to greater freedom; but whilst full provision has been made for the aspirations of British India in the Report and Draft Convention of the Nehru Committee and the Lucknow Conference, the Indian States are apparently asked to be satisfied and to continue for ever with things as they are, regardless of the rights and wrongs of the case, or the provisions of their Treaties, and regardless also of the universal, and natural, desire, and the right, of all human beings and bodies to exist, and to live their own lives, and to work out their own destinies, without encroachment, menace, anxiety or vexation. Surely further comment is uncalled for. And this is what the so-called representatives of the Indian States at the All-Parties Conference at Lucknow have apparently also given their blessing to. I confess that my ideal and those of the Princes and States generally as regards the future of our States is that we too should progress, and that our Governments and subjects also should enjoy the fullest freedom and internal autonomy, just as is desired and demanded for the various British Indian Provinces. But, after all, we Princes are “intolerable autocrats,” and the democratic subjects of the States present at the Conference apparently were content that they as well as their fellow subjects should remain in “perpetual” bondage and “slavery,” and under the domination even of the Commonwealth of India.

Turning now to the provision in the Nehru Committee Report for a Supreme Court, which runs as follows:—

“In case of any difference between the Commonwealth and any Indian State on any matter *arising out of treaties, engagements, sanads or similar other documents*, the Governor-General in Council *may*, with the consent of the State concerned, refer the said matter to the Supreme Court for its decision.”

I would like to point out that even under such a provision a reference to the Supreme Court in case of difference of opinion is not compulsory, but merely discretionary—such discretion being left to the Governor-General-in-Council, and further that only matters “*arising out of treaties, engagements, sanads or similar other documents*” can be thus referred to the Supreme Court. But what about the fiscal and such other justiciable matters which do not necessarily arise out of Treaties, Engagements, Sanads or similar other documents? Surely such matters, in their own way, are of no less importance to the Governments and subjects of our States than matters affecting our Treaty rights and other questions governing our political relations. Are the States and their subjects to be perpetually doomed to suffer from such grave disabilities

and to receive the same unequal and unjust treatment under the Commonwealth of India as they have hitherto, or is it because we are not to fare worse at the hands of the Indian Commonwealth than we do now with Britishers that it has not been found necessary to make any specific provisions, much less to give any specific statutory guarantees and safeguards to the States on the fiscal and economic side as well?

For a further consideration of this no less important point, one has to go back a bit, which makes it necessary to ask how far the British Indian Legislature and the British Indians have so far championed the just fiscal interests of the Indian States and their subjects; and specially so whenever there has been a conflict between the economic interests of British India and those of the States; and finally, again with a few honourable exceptions, would it be rude to ask what real sympathy, interest, grasp, or knowledge has been displayed as regards the Indian States' affairs by the Indian Members of the various Governments in British India? Can the States, who are asked to try the new system of domination and rule over them by the Indian democracy, be seriously expected to take a plunge in the dark and to commit their States and their subjects irrevocably, and without retrieve, without at least satisfying themselves that they will be sure of getting justice, under proper and adequate guarantees and safeguards, as regards their legitimate rights and claims?

Furthermore, according to the Nehru Committee's recommendations, endorsed also at the Lucknow Conference, the right has also been claimed, and accepted, for the Commonwealth of India to act both as Judges and parties in matters of conflict of interests between British India and the States, which is one of the serious disabilities of, and one of the important objections which the Princes have to, the present system whereby the present Government of India deal with such disputes.

Nothing is farther from my intention than to doubt the sincerity and honesty of purpose of those genuine British Indian friends who expressed their sincere and solemn determination to guarantee the rights and privileges of the States and who desired to see the States fairly and equitably treated. But one cannot altogether ignore the marked spirit and feeling of hostility displayed, apparently by the majority of the speakers, at Lucknow, with, if the Press reports are complete and correct, apparently the exception of only two of the more prominent leaders—the venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Dr. Ansari—who expressed their true sympathy with the States and tried to stop the scurrilous attacks made on, and the stabs in the back given to, some of the States, who were neither present nor represented at that Conference. And is it not further pertinent to ask why, amongst the numerous resolutions that were passed at Lucknow, there was only one resolution relating to the States, and that too the one with which I have already dealt at length? There was for instance an amendment moved by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to the Declaration of Rights, guaranteeing all titles in private and personal property, lawfully acquired and enjoyed at the establishment of the Commonwealth; and there was another amendment, moved again by the learned Panditji, enjoining upon the Parliament of the Commonwealth to make suitable laws for ensuring a fair rent and fixity of tenure to agricultural tenants. Will not the States be entitled to ask why—when it has been proposed that the States must form part of the future Indian Constitution and that they cannot be separated from the rest of India, and why when it is claimed for the Commonwealth that it shall enjoy political relations with the States and that it shall exercise and enjoy all rights, powers and functions relating to the Indian States—nothing whatsoever has been provided for the States in the Declaration of Rights; and why when, as is quite just and right, all titles in private and personal property lawfully acquired are guaranteed and why, as is equally meet and proper, when the Parliament of the Commonwealth is by law enjoined to ensure fair rent and fixity of tenure to agricultural tenants, was no resolution moved, nor any direction given to the Nehru Committee, and why nothing whatsoever

was specifically provided as regards the strict and scrupulous observance of the Treaties, and the Sovereign and other rights of the States, which cannot in any sense be held to be less important than private and personal property lawfully acquired? And would not the States be justified if, in view of all these circumstances, they came to the conclusion that they have received far less consideration and attention than was their legitimate due at every step and that, except where it suited the purpose of British India, the Indian States and their subjects have been practically ignored?

As another test of the measure of the real sympathy extended to the States in regard to their legitimate dues and aspirations, did any one at Lucknow stand up for the States and refer, for instance, to the Proclamation of the Great Queen Victoria—as much a Magna Charta, if its injunctions are faithfully followed, for the Indian States, as it was, at least till recently, regarded for British India—and how many people stood up and said at that Conference that it was up to the people of British India, as well as to its future Commonwealth, to give the most specific and definite guarantees to the Indian States to honour the provisions of their Treaties and of the Proclamations of Queen Victoria and other successive British Sovereigns, including that of His present Imperial Majesty, who was graciously pleased quite recently to give the following further pledge and assurance to the Princes and States of India :—

“In my former Proclamation I repeated the assurance given on many occasions, by My Royal Predecessors and Myself of My determination ever to maintain unimpaired the privileges, rights and dignities of the Princes of India. The Princes may rest assured that this pledge remains inviolate and inviolable.”

I think I have said more than is sufficient to disprove these baseless allegations and charges against the Princes which I trust will be found also to answer the direct question put by the *Leader* in its sympathetic and broadminded article, to which I alluded a little while ago. The *Leader* asked the Princes to make up their minds as to whether their interests lie in allying themselves with the forces of reaction or of progress ; and it concludes by saying that the Princes will be judged by their acts and not their professions.

I am sure the Princes and States ask for nothing better and for nothing more. As I have already explained, there is, and there can be, no question of the Princes allying themselves with any forces of reaction. They have in the past—and specially in the last eleven years from the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms—clearly and definitely arrayed themselves on the side of the forces of progress. All, therefore, that I need say further here to British India is : “Suspend judgment till the Scheme of the Princes is published ; and do not get unnecessarily excited or alarmed.” Time alone can prove the real state of affairs ; and there is not much longer now to wait ; nor, in view of what I have also said to-night, need there be any danger in any quarters of the States “stealing a march” over British India during the next few weeks.

And now a few words as regards our Scheme and constructive proposals. They are really based on proposals emanating from the various Meetings of Princes and Ministers, and specially at the first such meeting held in Bikaner in December, 1917, when the first draft of the Outlines of the Scheme was prepared, and subsequently at Patiala in January, 1918, when the proposals were finally put into shape. Some of these proposals, owing to the time being considered premature, and for other valid reasons, were not ultimately incorporated in the Outline as finally presented to Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu in Delhi in February, 1918, and which ultimately found their place in Chapter X of the Montford Report.

At the Patiala Meeting several prominent leaders of British India were also invited to take part in our deliberations, some of whom gave us the benefit of their valuable suggestions. So far as I remember, amongst those present at Patiala were : The late



Lord Sinha, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. Sastri, Sir Ali Imam, the late Mr. N. M. Samarth and Mr. Chintamani; whilst amongst others who were invited, but were unable to be present, were: speaking again from memory: Mr. (now Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru, the late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar and Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola.

In the circumstances, to ascribe the present States' proposals as a menace to British India and the machinations of Whitehall, or as the cunning plot of Sir Leslie Scott, is both unfair and incorrect. The Princes are deeply indebted to Sir Leslie Scott for much hard work and for elaborating, enlarging and improving upon their original proposals and contributing valuable suggestions; but in the main there is little that is new—and certainly nothing new, so far as I am aware, which can justly be taken as an attempt on the part of the Princes, or any one else, to place a permanent "barrier" against British India ever attaining Self-Government. After all, as Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya correctly remarked from his intimate knowledge of the States—but for which words he appears to have merely received a rebuke and a snub at Lucknow—all the Princes are neither reactionaries nor opposed to Indian aspirations, and he stated, what is a clear fact, that most of them, in fact, wish India all luck in her onward movement.

And now let us examine exactly what the States' Scheme in its broad details means and where a real and permanent obstacle or a barrier has been placed in the way of British India attaining its legitimate goal. It may be convenient at the commencement to make one or two general observations which have a bearing on the character of the representations on behalf of the States before the Indian States Committee. In the first place, that Committee is, as will be clear, not a judicial tribunal adjudicating on issues in dispute between contending parties. It is appointed for the purpose of a double function—obtaining knowledge in certain fields of law and fact, and making recommendations with a view to the better adjustment of the day to day relations between the States and British India in financial and economic matters. The Princes have very definitely approached the problem involved not from the point of view of enforcing—and merely enforcing—their own rights and privileges and those of their States, including, of course, the subjects of the States, but in order to make their contribution for the good of India as a whole, including British India, and for the good of India as a part of the British Empire. This attitude of the Princes applies equally to any wider aspect of the question, and the problems which may be outside the scope of the terms of reference of the Butler Committee. The fundamental standpoint of the States is that they ask for a full and effective recognition of all their existing rights—whatever they may be. By their existing rights are meant those existing rights—to use the term in the most general sense possible—to which they are truly entitled—whether they are to-day in actual enjoyment of them or not. They do not ask any more than their existing rights; and if justice is to be done to the States, the States are entitled to demand that they ought not to be, and cannot be, offered less—from any quarter. If the rights of the States can be truly ascertained, the Princes will be satisfied with that ascertainment. On that basis, it will then be possible to consider the conduct of the relations of the States with British India and the Crown and for the States, the Butler Committee, the British Government, and all those concerned, including the public, to form a wise judgment as to what alterations it is politic and wise to make in daily practice in the relations of the States with the Crown and British India and what proposals are wise for the future. The view of the States is that whatever proposals there may be for the adjustment of relations, they should be based on the true recognition of the rights of the States, provide for their due preservation, and at the same time contain suitable machinery for reasonable, harmonious and successful co-operation between the two sides of India—the States side and the British India side. That, I think, summarizes the attitude which, it is proposed by the Standing Committee, the Princes should take up before the Butler Committee.

As regards their constructive proposals, the first thing that the Princes and States want even under the existing conditions, and the present system of Government in India is that the case of the States should not go by default, and that in dealing with matters concerning purely the internal affairs of the States there should be some British Officers as well as some Indians with first hand knowledge of the Indian States to advise the Viceroy. And for this the Princes have suggested the creation of an Indian States Council. British India, or any third outside party, has no right to dictate to the States as to how matters relating to the internal affairs of the States—which are the concern solely of the Princes and their Governments and subjects—should be dealt with when they have to go up to the Paramount Power. There has been an insistent, and very reasonable, demand, gradually met, in the last twenty-one years that the Governor-General's Executive Council should have Indian Members on it; and that demand was prompted by the same desire, and for the same reasons, which now have prompted the Indian States in asking for an Indian States Council and for such matters to be decided, not by the Governor-General-in-Council, but by the Viceroy-in-Indian States Council. We have been asked why we exclude British Indians from this Indian States Council. Our reply is that it would be intolerable, and creating an impossible state of affairs for British India, if the Princes and people of the States claimed the right to interfere in the purely domestic affairs of British India, and that it would, in the same way, be equally impossible and intolerable to have any outside interference from British India in matters solely concerning the domestic affairs of the Indian States. For a consideration and decision of matters concerning commonly both British India and the Indian States, our Scheme proposes a Union Council. Surely if the matter is looked at calmly and impartially, no sane person can deny the rights of the States also to have a due voice in such matters of common concern, decisions of which by the Government of India vitally affect them and their subjects. In regard to certain matters we have, under careful definition and safeguards, proposed a Supreme Court to which disputes between British India and the Indian States shall be referred. I need not say much on this subject since—it is at least gratifying to find—that the British Indian leaders and the States are of one mind in regard both to the necessity, and the justice of appointing such a Supreme Court, although the deficiencies in connection with the proposals of the Nehru Committee and the All-Parties Conference relating to the Supreme Court, which I have already alluded to, require further consideration and adjustment.

These, as we maintain, are the broad and essential reforms vitally necessary for the integrity and preservation of the States. The other points on which there have been criticisms and apprehensions are, after all, mere matters of detail for discussion, deliberation, negotiation and adjustment, between the British Government and the States, or in days to come between British India and the States. And it should not be forgotten that the Princes have all along made it plain that they wish to be reasonable; and once their Treaty rights are justly recognized and admitted on all hands they would—as has already publicly been declared—be prepared to make sacrifices, provided they were reasonable, for the good of India as a whole and of the Empire.

Equally unfounded and untrue—as the charge of the Princes conspiring against British India—is the fantastic, wanton and cruel charge that the Princes, in asking for the Butler Committee, and in their Scheme, have totally ignored, and left out of all consideration, the subjects of the States, and that their motives in doing so were to enjoy unfettered autocratic power, and “continued unadulterated domination,” over their subjects, whom they seek to keep in “perpetual bondage” and “slavery,” for their personal, selfish ends and in order to enable the Princes to oppress and to fleece their subjects for their own pursuits and pleasures, without fear of interference or intervention—in short, that, in the face of the onrush of the tidal wave of democracy, the

of which I will once again give to-day the following extract from the gracious Proclamation of our present beloved King-Emperor, which His Imperial Majesty was graciously pleased to issue at the time of the institution of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 :—

“ In My former Proclamation I repeated the assurance, given on many occasions, by My Royal predecessors and Myself of My determination ever to maintain unimpaired the privileges, rights and dignities of the Princes of India. The Princes may rest assured that *this pledge remains inviolate and inviolable.*”

It was in view of such tactics and deliberate course of action that, besides referring to a few instances and details about the so-called friends and subjects of the Indian States, I said in my Administrative Conference Speech that the activities of such persons were not really so much concerned with the welfare of the States, but that their principal aim was to injure the Rulers of the States, and that in their bias and campaign against the Princes they were in effect trying to injure not only the Rulers and their Governments but also their subjects, which consisted not merely of the noisy elements and malcontents, but also of other communities and classes and interests with an important stake in the land. And it was for the same reasons that I referred in the same speech particularly to the gloating and jubilation of such States “ subjects ” over any humiliation—real or imaginary—offered to the Princes and States with reference to any adverse points or recommendations in the Butler Report or elsewhere—indeed, a sorry spectacle of the sincerity or political sagacity of such patriots and clameurs of the Indian States people.

And now to revert to what I alluded earlier in my speech, namely, the claim put forward by certain persons on behalf of the subjects of Indian States for the representation of their subjects as a separate and independent party, sitting and negotiating on an equal footing with the Rulers, at the proposed Conference in England. I referred to the subject very briefly in the course of my Interview when asked about the attitude of the Princes in regard to the invitation to a Round Table Conference by the All-Parties Convention ; and I was both surprised and sorry to see in a certain section of the Press my remarks on the subject described as bellicose. And numerous instances are forthcoming of what I said having been deliberately misrepresented, misconstrued and distorted with the obvious object of causing mischief between the Rulers and the ruled in the Indian States, and alienating and estranging the loyalty, devotion and affection of States subjects towards their Rulers, and creating—totally unnecessary and uncalled for—apprehensions and alarm in the minds of the *bona fide* loyal subject of the States. Various remarks and pleadings have been attributed to me in this connection which afford a temptation to expose such mischievous activities in detail ; but it would be a waste of time and energy to deal with them at any length. There has also been a good deal of confusion of thought and ideas ; and even the issues involved of the fact—that the deep-rooted and traditional loyalty of the people of Bikaner to their Ruler and State can be fully relied upon, I am anxious that such deliberately harmful propaganda and other activities of those who pose as the friends of the Indian States and their subjects, but who in reality are inspired by anything but friendly feelings towards the States, should be appreciated and understood at their true worth. And I therefore feel it a plain duty, speaking through you, the non-official members and real leaders and representatives of my subjects, to a wider audience of the loyal subjects of my State and other States, to refer to certain important details in this connection.

Perhaps, with a view to refreshing memories, it would be as well to trace the history of the matter and to give below a few extracts from my Speech delivered on the 9th September, 1928 :—

“ . . . from a perusal of the Report of the All-Parties Conference Committee, March, 1928, it would be clear that amongst the principles enunciated

by that Committee for determining the relations of the Indian States with the rest of India, it was laid down that the manner in which this fuller participation shall be effected between the Commonwealth of India and the Indian States in the common political, economic and social life of the Commonwealth will be determined by an agreement between the Commonwealth and Governments and people of the States. To that proposal there were two distinguished dissentients—Mrs. Besant and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya; and the latter proposed the deletion of the words “and people,” as, among other reasons, they were inconsistent with paragraph 2, in which provision was made for the Commonwealth respecting Treaty Rights of the States, etc.”

“I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am all for the association of the subjects with the Governments of their States. This is a policy which I and my Government have wholeheartedly and consistently followed. But the relations of all Nations and Governments, including the most democratic amongst them, are with the Rulers—in case of Autocracy—and with the Rulers and Governments—in cases of Constitutional Monarchy and Democracy. Thus, in matters affecting the States, the lawful authorities, with whom alone any such negotiations can be conducted, are the Rulers and the Governments of the States, whether such Governments profess autocracy, bureaucracy or democracy; and except in the case of ‘Mobocracy,’ no Government worthy of the name could, for a moment, agree to such negotiations to be bilateral, and conducted on the one side with the lawfully constituted Government of the State or country and, at the same time, on the other side, with the millions of subjects of a State or country—an impossible and obviously utterly impractical proposal which would be nothing but Mobocracy—unbridled Mobocracy, leading to a state of affairs which I have aptly seen defined as the ‘chaos of mobocracy’!”

The All-Parties’ Convention passed a Resolution at Calcutta on the 1st January, 1929, from which the following is a relevant extract:—

“This convention invites the Princes and *peoples* of Indian States to appoint representatives to confer with representatives of the Convention at a Round Table Conference with a view to discuss and agree upon the constitutional position and status of Indian States in the future Commonwealth of India and relations that should subsist between Indian States and the Central and Provincial Governments of the Commonwealth.”

The Convention appointed “representatives, referred to in the foregoing Resolution, with power to correspond with the States and *people's organizations* to appoint their representatives and to arrange for the conference not later than May next.”

It was on the 10th August, 1929, that Pandit Motilal Nehru wrote a letter to His Highness the Maharajah of Patiala, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, extending to him, and through him Their Highnesses the Members of the Chamber of Princes, a most cordial invitation to appoint representatives to confer with the Committee of the Convention on the points mentioned in the resolution of All-Parties Convention of the 1st January, 1929, already alluded to above.

Although no mention was made of the point in the invitation to His Highness, the Chancellor, it was clear from what appeared in some newspapers that an invitation of the Indian States, and that some alleged States Subjects’ Conferences had already appointed so-called States subjects to represent the States independently, and on an equal basis with the Rulers and Governments of States, at such a Round-Table Conference; and it needs to be borne in mind that the All-Parties Convention resolution,

# India and The Empire

(Speech at the Opening of the Imperial Conference, on Wednesday, the 1st October, 1930.)

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I have the honour, through the courtesy of my right honourable friend Mr. Wedgewood Benn, of addressing this Conference on behalf of India. For my colleagues of the Indian Delegation and myself, I desire to thank you, Sir, and the British Government most sincerely for the cordial welcome, as also the graceful hospitality, extended to us in common with the Prime Ministers and other representatives of the Dominions. As the spokesman to-day of the Indian Delegation, and through it of the Government, Princes and people of India, may I join the other speakers at this Conference in tendering our respectful and loyal greetings to Their Majesties and our assurances of unswerving devotion and attachment to the King-Emperor and his gracious Consort? As a former Prime Minister of Australia fittingly observed at a previous Conference, the Crown represents something more than the visible symbol of the Empire's unity, the centre of its loyalties and the link which binds the whole Empire together. To us Indians—and I speak for my fellow Princes as well as the great mass of my countrymen both in the Indian States and British India—there is something peculiarly sacred in our feelings of veneration for the Sovereign: and this is all the more so in the case of His Majesty King George V, whose life of selfless service in the cause of all the peoples of his vast Empire fulfils all the ideals of true Kingship set forth in our Holy Scriptures.

Some of those present here to-day are attending an Imperial gathering for the first time. I myself am one of the exceptions, as I had the privilege of representing India at the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference of 1917, and also at the few meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet in 1918-19 that preceded the Peace Conference. The new faces that I see amongst us to-day provide evidence of the change which is inevitable in human affairs. However, I venture to assert with confidence that whatever else these changes of personnel may signify, they mark no weakening of the spirit of devotion to the Crown or of attachment to the British Commonwealth of Nations. In 1917 I delivered to a similar distinguished Assembly a message of goodwill from my brother Princes especially entrusted to me at a Banquet in Bombay just before my departure from India, emphasizing their staunch loyalty to the august Person and Throne of His Majesty, their feelings of steadfast friendship and alliance with the Nations of the British Commonwealth and their determination, in the hour of crisis, to be once more true to their traditions of co-operating to the full extent of their resources in the cause of the Empire. I desire to repeat that message to-day.

The tasks that face us to-day differ from those that confronted the Empire thirteen years ago. The War has left a heritage of problems, political and economic, that need for their solution all the resources of statesmanship and all our reserve of patience, of mutual goodwill and trust. In the examination of the various important problems before us now, Prime Minister, the Conference may count upon the Indian Delegation making its full contribution.

There is one important problem which, for obvious reasons, finds no place among the agenda of this Conference. I refer, of course, to the Indian constitutional problem,

the difficulties of which have without doubt been accentuated by the emotional and spiritual forces that the Great War unchained. That problem is primarily one for Great Britain and India to solve together and is to be the subject of the Round-Table Conference which His Majesty's Government in Great Britain are convening next month. And yet I cannot let this occasion pass without reminding all my colleagues of the supreme urgency to the Empire of an early and satisfactory solution of this problem on courageous and statesmanlike lines. To omit all reference to it to-day would be to fail in one's duty to the King-Emperor and to the Commonwealth. We also owe it to our colleagues from the Dominions to enlighten them on the one question which, I expect, each one of them has asked himself during the last few months. Does India wish to remain within the Commonwealth? My answer, in spite of all that has happened and is happening in India, is "Yes." The Princes and subjects of the Indian States—whose interests I have the honour specially to represent here—of course retain their loyalty to the King-Emperor and attachment to the Empire undimmed. And the great bulk of the people of British India are, I venture to say, desirous at heart that their country shall occupy an honourable place in the comity of Nations that constitute the British Commonwealth. If this aspiration can be satisfied—as it is my hope and belief that it may be—the future will be full of promise. The Indian States, as you may be aware, have their own special problems requiring consideration and equitable adjustment, but there is nothing in those claims inconsistent with the desire of the Indian States to help India forward towards its promised goal as an integral part of the Empire.

The King-Emperor's gracious sympathy and solicitude for the Princes and people of India is well known to us all. His Majesty's Government in this country are happily alive to the gravity of the issues involved and are animated by a sincere and sympathetic desire to promote a settlement in conformity with legitimate Indian aspirations and with the solidarity of the Empire. May I add in conclusion that India feels confident that, in the delicate task that awaits the Round-Table Conference, she may count also upon the goodwill of the Great Dominions whose freedom in unity within the Empire represents the ideal of all that is best and—despite appearances—all that is most influential in contemporary Indian politics?

## The India of To-day

(Speech at the British-Indian Union Lunch on the 3rd November, 1930, in reply to the toast proposed by the Chairman, The Right Hon. The Marquis of Reading).

On behalf of myself and my Colleagues who have the honour of representing India at the Imperial Conference, may I first tender thanks for the compliment paid to us by the Committee and Members of the British-Indian Union; also to you, Sir, for your courtesy in making the time in a very strenuous life to preside to-day, and for your cordial references to myself? It was with special pleasure that I accepted the invitation to be present at this pleasant luncheon. It affords me an opportunity of reviving the friendship which, I think I may say, marked our relations during the five years of your Viceroyalty, when so many great events and movements stirred India—a period which happened to coincide with my own term of office as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes to which you, Sir, have referred. It also gives me an opportunity of expressing my warm sympathy with the objects of the British-Indian Union. The years which have passed since the Union was established not long after the War have confirmed my appreciation of the importance of this Society and of the value of the work which it is doing. For the basic idea behind your activities is Union—we recognize that the unique association of Britain and India demands a friendly partnership inspired by mutual respect and trust, and you strive to fulfil that purpose by bringing together all who seek the closer unity of Britain and India. This is an object very near to my heart and at which I have aimed all the years of my life. My earnest hope is that the Union will go forward and flourish and that the common service we wish to give the Crown and the Commonwealth may be made more effective by the spirit of co-operation it is your purpose to develop.

There are other reasons which accentuate the pleasure I have in being here to-day. Your President is His Royal Highness The Duke of Connaught, to whom I shall ever remain deeply indebted for many gracious acts of great personal kindness. Next to those of Their Majesties no name is held in higher honour and esteem, nay affection, in India than that of this distinguished son of the Great Queen Victoria. There are not, I suppose, many living to-day who have personal memories of the days of His Royal Highness' active work in India, when as Commander-in-Chief of what was then the Bombay Army he left a deep impress on its efficiency, and on the defences of the Harbour which made it secure in the anxious days of the War. After a long life devoted to the public service, His Royal Highness would be forgiven if he felt that his work was done and he is entitled to rest. But he knows no weariness in well doing; and his active interest he takes in the work of this Union, and in many other important bodies, shows how vivid is still his sense of duty, and how strong is his attachment to my own dear land. We recall with special gratitude the readiness with which he put all other considerations aside, and on behalf of His Majesty journeyed again to India to inaugurate the new Constitution embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919. He is indeed an inspiration and exemplar to us all. Other honoured friends of mine are intimately connected with the Union—in particular Lord Willingdon,

who leaves a fragrant memory wherever he serves. To them and all other workers who believe that the future of India can best be ensured under the Crown and within the Commonwealth, our thanks are due.

You will probably before many months have the opportunity of welcoming another great servant of the Crown in the person of Lord Irwin, whose term of office, unfortunately for India no less than for the Empire, is drawing toward its close. It is not easy for me to speak of one I have learnt deeply to admire and respect while he is still in Office. But I cannot let the occasion pass without saying this. When Lord Irwin was appointed to the Viceroyalty the Government of the day sent India of their best. A man of the loftiest character, with an assured place in Parliament and the Cabinet, he accepted this new responsibility, and has filled it with the singleness of purpose which has stamped all his public life. We Indians, whatever our creed, honour all men who are staunch in their own faith, even though it differs from ours. Lord Irwin is above all things a Christian gentleman. We Indians who have been in intimate touch with the Indian scene, and who realize more correctly than critics at a distance—including some whose knowledge of India is now out of date—the extraordinary complications resulting from the surge for full nationhood which has arisen with such tremendous force, are in a position fairly to judge his policies and his work. With that knowledge, informed by the experience of thirty-two years of active rule since I came of age, and with a large stake in India, I wish to state my conviction that during these very difficult and anxious days Lord Irwin has been the rallying point of all who wish to serve India and the Commonwealth. High above conflict, undeterred by clamour, no matter from what side, he has pursued serene and unruffled the task of securing in India the widest attainable measure of unity and confidence whilst the path of constitutional progress is being mapped out. The greatest personal force leading to confidence and co-operation, without which little of value will be achieved, is the personal trust reposed in such a wide measure on all sides in the Viceroy; when he lays down his burden of office it will be with the knowledge that all man could do he has done to steer India through these very stormy waters to the constitutional haven which we hope will be created by the Round-Table Conference in London. Feeling this very strongly, I am cut to the quick to find his policies misunderstood and his motives misrepresented by many who, remote from the realities of the situation, cannot appreciate the special problems he has had to face. Nevertheless, I feel assured that when the dust of controversy is laid he will have high place in that band of great Englishmen who, with a single eye to their duty, turned neither to the right nor to the left in their determination to serve India and help her forward to her great destiny, and in so doing rendered invaluable services to the great Empire over which our beloved King-Emperor rules.

You will ask: What of the India to-day? What lies behind the development of this year which have caused so many who love India and desire to serve her pain and anxiety? This Society knows no politics and identifies itself with no Party, either here or in India. But without trespassing on this forbidden ground, there are a few thoughts I would put before you. We are witnesses of the pangs of travail at the birth of nationhood. The seeds of these great forces were sown a century ago, when English was chosen as the medium of higher education. The soil has been continuously warmed and fertilized by vivid contact with English literature and English institutions. Stage by stage, sometimes too slowly, sometimes perhaps quickly, India moved to the position when the demand for self-government inevitably arose, and the principle cannot use a less expressive word—for equal status in the world became the dominating desire of the hour. Rightly understood, this is not only natural, but should be the pride of all who have laboured in and for India. The political aspirations of India is thus neither limited nor unnatural. It is the result of a century and fifty years' association with Great Britain. You



as ours British history and British literature without awakening in them desires and ideals akin to your own. If sometimes the political evolution of India seems to lean to the extreme, the explanation is not a change of political faith, but the clouding of faith by pessimism. This cannot be banished by invoking the hope that maketh the heart sick, but only by a determination to translate these ideals into realities. The imperative need of the day, therefore, is for courage, and a sympathetic and imaginative understanding—not for distrust and timid caution. To me and my colleagues at the approaching Round-Table Conference—from British India, as well as from the territories of the Ruling Princes—has been committed the great responsibility of welding these forces into a constitution which will place India firmly on the road to full political stature and an equal place within the British Commonwealth of Nations. We shall approach this task with the fullest sense of responsibility, in the spirit of service and the spirit of humility, but in the confidence that we can achieve success if we work in union and understanding. You will ask, as indeed I am asked wherever I go, what will be the ambition of India when she assumes these powers and all the onerous responsibilities they entail? Before attempting to answer that question, I would beg everyone to remember that there are two parties in British Indian politics. There are those who are not unjustly described as extremists, aiming at the complete independence of India and the establishment of a socialist republic or some other form of government which has never been clearly defined. From them we are wide as the Poles asunder. Then there is the great body of opinion, loyal at heart to the Crown, yet resolute in the determination to win for India as soon as may be feasible full responsible government and equality of dignity and status in the British Commonwealth of Nations, but which pursues the path of ordered progress and believes that India can best fulfil her destiny under the ægis of the King-Emperor.

The policy of the Princes and States at the Conference will be determined by their representatives now assembling in London and will necessarily be influenced by the circumstances that arise. But, speaking for myself, I shall indeed be surprised if the States do not lay emphasis on two essential conditions, which I have had occasion previously to outline both in India and since my arrival here. They are:—

- (1) That India retains the British connection as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations; and
- (2) That an equitable agreement is reached between all the parties concerned to govern the relations of the two Indias, ensuring for the States their due position in the future constitution as co-equal partners with British India, guaranteeing their Treaties and internal Sovereignty, and safeguarding their interests, including those of their subjects, on terms just and honourable alike to the States and British India.

Subject to recognition of these essential conditions, I am confident that the Princes and States will readily support all legitimate proposals emanating from their friends in British India. Further, I feel I may safely add that we shall cheerfully devote all our energies and influence, in co-operation with the representatives of His Majesty's Government and the Imperial Parliament, to securing for India that control of her own affairs and that fullness of stature in the Empire which I, in common with many others, sincerely believe to be in the best interests of Great Britain and of my Motherland. With that definition, I can only reply to the question in the words I used at the opening of the Imperial Conference the other day . . . . In spite of all that has happened, and is happening, India does wish to remain within the Commonwealth. The Princes and subjects of the Indian States, of course, retain undimmed their loyalty to the King-Emperor and attachment to the Empire, and the great majority of the people of British India are, I firmly believe, desirous at heart that their country shall occupy an honourable place in the British Empire. It is surely our common task to see that with the continuance of the British-Indian union this aspiration is satisfied, to the great and enduring benefit of all concerned.

